

**Clarification of Testimony: Adam Motter for House Primary and Secondary Committee.**  
[Original testimony from May 16th, 2023](#)

Chair Bird, Please accept this document as part of the clarification of the record of my testimony asked for by Representative Williams to be shared with the committee.

Representative Josh Williams (District 41) asked that I supplement the record to better learn about a claim I made in testimony.

The claim I made in my written testimony is as follows:

- *According to their vision for a better America, there is a core purpose for the creation of the “Civics” Alliance, which encompasses their scholarly organization and their American Birthright Standards. Three big ideas of the “vision” are:*
  - *Removing all discussion and related conversations around race or any “divisive” issues. In particular, reducing discussion around racism related to Black American history is a significant stated intent.*
  - *Ensuring students do not practice or apply the democratic values related to being an active citizen (protesting, questioning, critical thinking, volunteering to support solutions, etc) . This view is held to the extreme, it means zero participation of students to engage in any of these civic activities.*
  - *Fighting against “trained activists” who are “replacing the American republic with a Neo-Marxist regime.”*

Additionally, in response to questioning from Representative Lear I used the phrasing “...Tell me a time when the government didn’t want open conversation around race...”

Representative Williams asked that I supplement the record. His question was: “I Cannot find the specific language that prohibits discussion of Racism or Racist past in America” (in the Civics Alliance Vision Statement).

**Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to support the veracity of my claim.** I would not fault a single person for looking at the vision page and at first blush, brush past many significant issues. There is a lot communicated in the vision and the links are even more cumbersome to unpack.

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Regarding open conversations around race, particularly conversations around Racism, here are the sources [directly from the vision](#) that I built my analysis on. It includes the following:

- The first exposure to my claim comes from “Where did Action Civics Come From”. The author warns us that there are “radical ideological causes” and proves it by linking to the [Texas Public Policy Foundation](#) (conservative “think tank”) that showcases **student protest against racism** (among other kinds of protests) as part of the bad kind of civics. I didn’t pay too much mind to this, as the authors list all kinds of protests in their research article.
- Next, in “Where did Action Civics Come From”. The author claims that radicals who invoke “civics” include “so called Antiracism”.
  - This is the first time I see Antiracism (regardless of definition) as part of the bad civics the author wishes to ban.
  - Further, the author links Antiracism to this [document](#).
    - As you read through the iCivics thoughts in the wake of the George Floyd Murder you will come to this: *“iCivics is committed to unveiling the larger context around institutional racism. We do not have all of the answers, but we know that we must take more time and skill in telling the stories that all too often are kept out of classrooms. We know that this is a critical component of creating a better, more effective civic education in K-12 schools. We know that civic education must be transparent and explicit about racism if we want young people to engage civically as partners going forward.”*
      - It is clear the author considers this narrative radical, and wishes to ban it. This is the part of civic engagement he is not OK with. This was also the first evidence of the author’s intent around discussions of racism.
- The next section “What’s at Stake” starts with the author connecting civics with the 1619 Project. **To be clear, this is where the author states that civics is responsible for the connection to sources that are around the topic of racism toward Black Americans. Quoted directly from vision:**
  - “2019 and 2020 made painfully apparent the acid effects of the New Civics and its allied educational movements on America’s national cohesion and heritage of liberty.”
  - “Radicals who espouse identity politics, and those who espouse such overlapping ideologies of critical race theory, multiculturalism, so-called “anti-racism,” and Neo-Marxist forms of “social justice,” seek to annihilate our liberty, our republic, and the national culture that underpins them both. Their favored educational tactic is to remove traditional civics from our schools and to replace them with New Civics, which inculcates the successor ideology of identity politics instead. These radicals seek to do so by packaging their radical agendas under labels such as “anti-racism”—although Americans already reject racism as part of their capacious and welcoming nationalism. The American creed is already e pluribus unum—America forges its citizens from all the nations of the earth.”

- I am not an expert in the culture wars. Frankly, I hope none of us are. My expertise is in social studies education. Teachers teach the standards, they teach US history, most of which is full of stories, peoples and events we can all be very proud of, though some of it less so (both are represented in our current Ohio SS standards). Racism exists in this country, that is fact. Banning conversations around this, typically tied to events in the past (such as the example they linked to the [Pulitzer lesson](#) that the author links) and banning current civic action around racial discussions such as the example linked to the civics group that [supports student action](#), is clearly the goal of this vision.
  - On to “The Challenge of Action Civics”
    - The author tries to make the claim that “By 2021, the U.S. Education Department DEFINED CIVICS EDUCATION as The 1619 Project and Ibram X. Kendi’s “anti-racism”.”
      - This is patently false. [How the Department of Education defines and measures civics can be found here.](#)
      - This inaccurate statement was done for the purpose of making the false claim that the US government defines Civics as the bad civics (that they call “new civics”).
      - Fact: There was a competitive grant and one of the priorities was to look at history through multiple perspectives. The priorities in the grant are not the Fed’s definition of Civics. [You can read it yourself if you click on this link.](#) [This grant competition](#) contains two absolute priorities, two competitive preference priorities, and one invitational priority.
      - The author is making the claim that the U.S. Department of Education’s definition of civics is the bad “New Civics”. I am not sure if this example really relates to the veracity of my claim, but the vision website contains multiple examples supporting the idea that any discussion around racism is bad and should be banned.
- **“What We Must Do”**
  - Clearly this is the action that they plan on taking as stated by the title.
  - In the first link: *Civics Education Open Letter and Civics Curriculum Statement* you will find the following:
    - “... the radical New Civics activists, which espouse identity politics with overlapping ideologies of critical race theory, multiculturalism, and so-called “antiracism.” Unfortunately, these dogmas would ruin our country by destroying our unity, our liberty, and the national culture that sustains them.”
    - “Well-intentioned reformers must not collaborate with those promoting an ideology that would destroy America. They should not endorse supposedly nonpartisan New Civics education that is really left-wing

activism in disguise. They must instead work for true civics education that explicitly excludes the imposter New Civics and its favored pedagogies.”

### Analysis of my claim

- “New Civics” includes having conversations around racism. Particularly the idea of racism today and how it has been manifested from our history.
  - Apparently only Black American racism is the issue (as this is the only group that the manifesto has a problem with as far as I can tell).
  - Issues around open conversations regarding race are clearly a significant argument in the manifesto. “What is at stake” is essentially dedicated to this topic.
  - **Conversations around racism are clearly part of the “New Civics”. The evidence of this is peppered throughout the vision. Racism today is excluded from the American Birthright Standards. This vision calls for “New Civics” to be banned in education.**
- The Civics Alliance would ban all “New Civics” through “American Birthright: The Civics Alliance’s Model K-12 Social Studies Standards.”

### Context of Claim

The claim I made in my written testimony is as follows:

- *According to their vision for a better America, there is a core purpose for the creation of the “Civics” Alliance, which encompasses their scholarly organization and their American Birthright Standards. Three big ideas of the “vision” are:*
  - *Removing all discussion and related conversations around race or any “divisive” issues. In particular, reducing discussion around racism related to Black American history is a significant stated intent.*
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**I believe you will find it clear based on the evidence that The Civics Alliance, throughout their Birthright Standards, wants to reduce discussion around racism in America.**

When you take all 3 of these side by side they represent an ideology that is dangerous and has no place in our society whatsoever. It certainly should not be used for the foundation of anything, but especially not for Social Studies standards in Ohio. This has an added sense of moral and ethical outrage for the social studies teacher. Social Studies teaches that this type of ideology in government is perhaps the greatest wrong of the 20th Century.

I resolutely denounce Mr. Randall and the organizations he is affiliated with. His scare tactics and threats of ruination are no match for reason and transparency. I recommend to everyone on this committee that you steer clear of such organizations and work with educators in Ohio to build consensus and meaningful laws. I am grateful you have this information before you vote.