



CHUCK WICHGERS

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 83rd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Joint Hearing on Education

August 11, 2021

Assembly Bill 411 & Senate Bill 411

State Representative Chuck Wichgers, 83rd Assembly District

Chairwoman Darling, Chairman Thiesfeldt, and Committee Members,

Thank you for hearing my testimony today on Assembly Bill 411 and Senate Bill 411 relating to anti-racism and anti-sexism training for employees of school districts and independent charter schools.

I am co-authoring this legislation with Sen. Jacque to reaffirm the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution. Section 1 of the amendment states, "No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

The proposed legislation seeks to enforce Section 1 of the 14th Amendment, also known as the Equal Protection Clause. We are asking the governor and the legislature to pass this bill to prevent government schools from violating this amendment which we all took an oath to uphold.

It has come to our attention, and to some of the people who traveled here to Madison today, that a growing number of school districts are teaching material that attempts to redress the injustice of racism and sexism by employing racism and sexism, as well as promoting psychological distress in students based on these immutable characteristics. No one should have to undergo the humiliation of being told that they are inferior to someone else; we are all members of the human race.

As a state and a nation, we will not defeat racism by employing racist behavior.

In fact, one of the main proponents of a term called critical race theory, Ibram Henry Rodgers, who later changed his name to Ibram X. Kendi is quoted as saying, "... the only remedy to past discrimination is present discrimination. The only remedy to present discrimination is future discrimination."

I do not agree with his statement and I do not believe our schoolchildren or the employees at our government schools should be forced to listen to this pedagogy.

I mentioned the term critical race theory earlier. This is a catch-all term or an ever-changing term to

suit the needs of an argument. One of the most simplistic definitions I have seen is this: critical race theory centers on the idea that racism is systemic-that racial injustice is woven into the fabric of many American systems and institutions, thereby causing disparities and perpetuating the oppression of people of color.

I have an addendum to my testimony that lists several of the different terms associated with critical race theory or the words that are part of the praxis of the theory. Yes, it's extensive and you can tell a lot of this was created in legal academia, but the point of this legislation is to prohibit it from being taught in our government schools.

Detractors of this legislation assert that we are "trying to prohibit teachers from teaching about racism." This could not be further from the truth. Assembly Bill 411 does not restrict teaching and inquiry about the history of racism; it restricts indoctrination, abusive pedagogies, and state-sanctioned racism. Directing teachers not to inculcate beliefs is very different from telling teachers they can't acknowledge the existence of certain ideas.

According to one leading researcher on the issue, Christopher F. Rufo, "CRT isn't an exercise in promoting racial sensitivity or understanding history. It's a radical ideology that seeks to use race as a means of moral, social, and political revolution. The left-leaning media has sought to portray it as a 'lens' for examining the history of racism in the U.S., but this soft framing obscures the nature of the theory, which maintains that America is an irredeemably racist nation and that the constitutional principles of freedom and equality are mere 'camouflages,' in the words of scholar William F. Tate IV, for white supremacy.

The problem is that critical race theory and its related ideas form a closed system. It is a perspective that leaves no space for anyone, no matter how well-intentioned, to see the world differently. When presented as the singular valid worldview, it is not a productive way to engage with students, groups, or with one another.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

Addendum to Rep Wichgers' testimony on AB 411

Additional Terms

Additional terms and concepts below that either wholly violate the above clauses, or which may if taught through the framework of any of the prohibited activities defined above, partially violate the above clauses in what is otherwise broadly defined as "critical race theory":

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Action Civics

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Culturally responsive teaching

Abolitionist teaching

Affinity groups

Anti-racism

Anti-bias training

Anti-blackness

Anti-meritocracy

Obtuse meritocracy

Centering or de-centering

Collective guilt

Colorism

Conscious and unconscious bias

Critical ethnic studies

Critical pedagogy

Critical self-awareness

Critical self-reflection

Cultural appropriation/misappropriation

Cultural awareness

Cultural competence

Cultural proficiency

Cultural relevance

Cultural responsiveness
Culturally responsive practices
De-centering whiteness
Deconstruct knowledges
Diversity focused
Diversity training
Dominant discourses
Educational justice
Equitable
Equity
Examine "systems"
Free radical therapy
Free radical self/collective care
Hegemony
Identity deconstruction
Implicit/Explicit bias
Inclusivity education
Institutional bias
Institutional oppression
Internalized racial superiority
Internalized racism
Internalized white supremacy
Interrupting racism
Intersection
Intersectionality
Intersectional identities
Intersectional studies
Land acknowledgment
Marginalized identities
Marginalized/Minoritized/Under-represented communities

Microaggressions
Multiculturalism
Neo-segregation
Normativity
Oppressor vs. oppressed
Patriarchy
Protect vulnerable identities
Race essentialism
Racial healing
Racialized identity
Racial justice
Racial prejudice
Racial sensitivity training
Racial supremacy
Reflective exercises
Representation and inclusion
Restorative justice
Restorative practices
Social justice
Spirit murdering
Structural bias
Structural inequity
Structural racism
Systemic bias
Systemic oppression
Systemic racism
Systems of power and oppression
Unconscious bias
White fragility
White privilege

White social capital

White supremacy

Whiteness

Woke