



WISCONSIN FAMILY ACTION
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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 411/ASSEMBLY BILL 411
SENATE & ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION – JOINT HEARING
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2021
JULIAINE K. APPLING, PRESIDENT**

Thank you, Chairwoman Darling, Chairman Thiesfeldt and committee members, for the opportunity to speak in support of SB 411 and its companion AB 411. This proposal prohibits anti-racism and anti-sexism pupil instruction and anti-racism and anti-sexism training for employees of school districts and independent charter schools.

While the bills do not use the term “Critical Race Theory,” the components the bills address are part of what is commonly and popularly referred to as “Critical Race Theory” or CRT. Thus, we believe it is appropriate to address this topic and use this term as we discuss these bills.

CRT is deeply rooted in Marxism and is one of the biggest threats to fundamentally changing our Republic. Proponents of CRT make race the lens through which we are to view all aspects of American life. CRT views our government and our laws as systemically racist, uses identity politics, which weakens the public and private bonds that serve as a foundation of trust and allow for civic engagement, and seeks to destroy the people’s sovereignty by allowing government to become a dictatorship.

Critical Race Theory, like many movements designed to destroy our Republic, evolved from ivory tower philosopher-academics and has permeated Main Street America, shaping the way we ordinary people think. We are bombarded with dialogue about CRT in social media, in corporate boardrooms, K-12 classrooms, in both public entities and private business diversity training and even in church. Not only has the CRT journey made record time from think tanks to dinner tables, it is gas lighting racial tensions and deepening our divide.

It is important to recognize that CRT holds to the idea that:

1. **There is no absolute truth**—only competing narratives. It sees “lived experiences” as mattering more than facts.
2. **Individuals are either an oppressor or victim.** Individuals are predetermined by immutable characteristics such as race to fall into either category. Culture is defined by groups exercising power over each other.
3. **America is systemically racist and must be dismantled.** It sees America as having been founded on the system of capitalism, which it asserts is racist, and therefore must be disrupted.

True equality will be achieved by maximizing the opportunities for Americans to become self-sufficient, not by dividing Americans on the basis of race and doling out resources based on skin color.

If CRT is implemented in our schools and other institutions, its social policies would continue to erode the key preconditions for advancement—family, education, and work.

Because of the foregoing, we contend the following related to SB 411 and AB 411:

- Curriculum content in Wisconsin schools must not use the goal of teaching diversity of thought as a reason to teach students to view the world through a racial lens, which also much too often requires

students of a certain race to basically apologize for the race they were created as a part of. That should never happen in our schools.

- Curriculum content should use instructional content that creates a shared sense of national identity – America belongs to *all* Americans—and that our nation’s progress is worth celebrating. No student should ever have to assume guilt for something he or she has had absolutely nothing to do with.
- Curriculum content should highlight the foundational principles of our constitution: equality of all humans with equal protection under the law. There should be no place in our schools for so-called equity that grants special rights to some and denies others of the same rights. That promotes racism and discrimination.

Educational institutions, school districts, superintendents and teachers should be champions of rebuilding the institutions of family, education, and the workplace so that all citizens, regardless of skin color, can overcome the barriers to self-sufficiency.

Our educational institutions should be focusing on ways to close the achievement gap between whites and minorities and working to reduce barriers to success by strengthening family and self-sufficiency, especially on the heels of COVID shutdowns.

Heading into the 20-21 school year, students were already behind due to the spring shutdown. According to a study by McKinsey & Company, kindergarten through fifth-grade students only learned 67 percent of the math and 87 percent of the reading that grade-level peers would typically have learned by the fall, citing the Curriculum Associates i-Ready platform.

Yet for schools whose student bodies were made up of more than 50 percent of people of color, those numbers dropped to 59 percent in math and 77 percent in reading. In comparison, schools with more than 50 percent white students learned 69 percent of the math and 90 percent of the reading that their peers typically have learned in a normal school year. As the coronavirus pandemic continues to disrupt schooling across the country, students are falling behind—and none more than Black and Hispanics. This will have long-term, possibly lifetime, implications on their earnings and health for starters.

Fixing these disparities is where our focus should be, not on promoting racism and discrimination by being allowed to teach any of the components of CRT. Senate Bill 411 and Assembly Bill 411 go a long way to keeping the focus in our schools where it should be. We urge you to support the bills in committee and move the bill to the respective floors for full votes.

Thank you for your attention and thoughtful consideration of our position on these bills.