



Hallie Q. Brown Community Center, Inc.

Dear Friends of Hallie Q. Brown,

If you have seen the news anywhere in the last year or two you have seen headline after headline reporting on politicians taking the brave stance of refusing to allow Critical Race Theory (CRT) to be taught in primary and secondary schools in their district or state; some even going as far as to propose or enact legislation forbidding it. Surrounded by these are scores of angry parents showing up at school board and other public meetings, exercising their First Amendment rights by vehemently and sometimes violently opposing CRT being taught in those same schools.

Can any of us truly blame them for their outrage? They are protecting their children! Children are sent to school to be educated, not indoctrinated! As a father myself, there is nothing I wouldn't do to protect my daughters and so, the passion and position of these righteous champions have won me over. I am writing to add my voice to this clarion call!

CRT should NOT be taught in these schools of this great nation.

Never.

Absolutely not!

We are so very fortunate, therefore, that it has never been...**ever**.

In fact, nor has it ever been planned to be incorporated into school lessons...

And in actuality, nor could it...

So...mission accomplished! Let's hang up the banner and we can all sleep soundly tonight knowing that this great crisis, that never was, nor could be, has been averted!

.
. .
.

Or perhaps...we can spend a little time during Black History month understanding why there is such outrage and hostility over something that isn't actually happening and never will.

To do that, we have to **ACTUALLY** understand, what CRT is and what it is not.

Contrary to the popular, misinformed beliefs, CRT is NOT about denouncing White people, indoctrinating children into Marxism or just plain "inherently divisive" These are several of the myths that have been pushed out into the general public regarding CRT because they make sensational talking (shouting) points. The politician's use these as justification for their platforms, the misinformed parents as justification for their outrage...and the people who actually know these are myths, use them as a means to propagate White supremacy.

What CRT actually is, is a graduate school level academic framework, the core of which is that race is a social construct, and racism is not merely individual bias or prejudice, but something embedded in our legal systems, practices and policies, etc. This framework offers a lens that if you view said policies, systems, practices, events, etc. through, can reveal the racist intent, underlying motivation or root cause. In other words, the truth that is omitted allowing such policies and practices to seem legitimate and any disagreement or questioning of legitimacy to be dismissed and overlooked as inconsequential.

To give you an example, if you looked at the recent homeownership rates by race in the US, you would see that at 43.1%, Black people are the lowest of any racial group while White people are the highest at 74.4%. Looking at this through the typical lens of the present moment in time, it is easy to explain this away as Black people having less income, lower paying jobs, less affordable housing in their neighborhood, or the stereotypes around laziness or lower priorities. Without a second thought, those reasons are accepted and the gap is considered to be of our own making or shortcomings.

However, viewed through the lens of CRT, you would explore more than just the present condition, but also the major root causes and you would find one in the actions of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). When the FHA began providing 30-year mortgages and financing to increase homeownership, only a small portion, less than 2% of the \$120B they underwrote between 1934-62, went to people of color. A core part of this was that they instituted a nationwide appraisal system that rated 239 cities across the US on their level of security for real estate investments. The ratings determined which areas were more favorable and therefore received the largest amount of investment. White suburban areas were rated the highest and coded green, while areas in the inner city were rated as the highest risk because of factors such as the presence of just one or two families of color and therefore not desirable for approving home loans in. These areas were code red and this is where the term redlining comes from.

When you incorporate in these factors, much less segregation and outright discrimination, it reveals a direct causal effect of racism on the homeownership gap; a root cause that would not be apparent without CRT.

Now, let's return to those schools with the politicians introducing legislation and the parents yelling at school board members because they don't want CRT being taught in them...but it's not being taught in them. And while they insist that the danger is real, I challenge you to find a single 4th grade teacher with a syllabus or a lesson that includes the introduction of any graduate level academic framework much less one for analyzing legal policies for their racially discriminatory factors. No class is reading "Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Racially Discriminatory Practice."

CRT is not, has never been, nor ever will be taught in primary or secondary schools. It is a graduate school level concept, and therefore, would not be taught below that level of academia.

What, then, is the issue? Where is all this confusion coming from, then, if CRT isn't being taught in schools? How is this myth being propagated, and more importantly why?

It is because CRT has become a catch-all phrase for any topic or issue that paints White people in a negative light, makes them uncomfortable, or directs attention to laws, events or practices they established, with a racial component. It asks us to look beyond where we are at the present time and explore how we got here. What lead to the current state of affairs and condition...

Because of this, CRT also provides a clearer view of Black history by spotlighting the systemic causes of the obstacles, injustices and barriers that Black people and other persons of color have had to endure and overcome. Therefore when teaching Black history, schools are not presenting the narrative of the "*happy slaves*" who "*had worked hard in Africa, so the work on the Virginia plantations did not hurt them.*" And "*the Negroes learned also to enjoy the work and play of the plantations...Virginia offered a better life for the Negroes than did Africa...*" (this is actual text from a history book used in Virginia schools from the 1950s until the mid-1970s). But rather the true dehumanizing experiences of being separated from families and tribal members to prevent communication and organization, rape, abuse, maltreatment and murder that were the hallmarks of daily, weekly and yearly life within Slavery.

So schools are not teaching CRT, they are teaching the results of a CRT lens...true history.

And actual full accountings of history do not portray White people, as a whole, in the most positive light: The decimation of 90% of the Native American population through biological warfare (smallpox blankets and other diseases), killing of 22 million Africans during the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the Porvenir Massacre, Japanese Internment Camps, Segregation, the list goes on and on. And as we have started to teach more honest, more in-depth history it has deconstructed the myth that ALL people, including White people, have been misled by, that America is a perfect shining jewel that has always done the right thing, been the best there is, and has singularly represented freedom...

America has been all these things...if you're White. (And more often than not, wealthy and White). But it has not been this way if you're a person of color. Laws, policies, practices, etc. have been targeted towards people of color and our culture since the founding of this country. From the Black codes to the forced relocations of Native Americas, to the Japanese internment camps just to name a few, our country has a long and checkered past of discrimination, oppression and marginalization incorporated into the very same systems that have made America such a land of opportunity for White people.

Let me be very clear for my White friends and colleagues out there, unless you were personally involved in the creation or maintenance of these laws, policies or practices, you are NOT to blame for these measures, it is NOT your fault that they exist...However, you ARE responsible for addressing them.

Therein lies one of the key reasons for the rancor and opposition to CRT...as well as the proof that

those opposed do not have any idea what CRT actually is and that all of the noise is about maintaining systems of oppression, not making sure issues are addressed appropriately.

Those who have enjoyed White privilege, the myth of America and the systems and policies we have in place do not want to have those taken away...but they also don't want to admit that, because that confirms that it is not a myth for White people and that their advantage comes at the expense of people of color. CRT, however shifts the focus of the reason from individual people to the systems in place; it actually removes the blame from White people to the unjust laws, practices, policies, etc. in place.

So, IF CRT were ACTUALLY able to be use in schools, it would teach that the laws, policies and practices were racist and largely responsible for the conditions of today, not the White students sitting in those classrooms. So, if anything, it would provide relief for White students because they would learn that it is not their fault.

But then the parents and politicians would lose their yelling point...and the myth that they built this country...or they got where they are based solely on their own merits...or their "shadowy villain" who they can campaign on or justify any action taken in the name of defense.

In other words, they would not be able to hide behind this, and instead would have to take a look a good hard look at America, and their own lives and make some changes to fulfill what they have believed our country to be.

It would also remove the ability to use CRT as a basis for promoting school choice and vouchers that would remove the resources and investment from public schools, but that's a story for the next newsletter.

CRT is not now, has never been and could never be taught in the schools. Anyone who is arguing about this, either doesn't know what it is, or simply wants to use it as a means to attack anything they don't like, such as certain books or subjects that they don't like. This is evidenced by the fact that in the last year, 37 states have introduced legislation to eliminate the teaching of CRT or anything they deem related to CRT, i.e. Black achievement, Slavery, the Jim Crow, Red Summer, Rosewood, Tulsa Race Massacre, etc.

Those subjects make those parents and politicians uncomfortable because they might have to answer some questions about why these laws, practices and policies still exist and why aren't they working to remove them.

Being held accountable is never comfortable, but perhaps, looking through the lens of CRT, it can be made clear, that that is preferable then continuing to perpetuate a system of inequity.

At least, that is what America is supposed to be about.

Respectfully,



Jonathan Palmer
Executive Director

When you live in a predominantly white area, the voices of black people can be the varying points of view.

For more information and details on the history of the Tulsa Massacre, please visit our [Addressing Systemic Racism](#) page on our website.

Find us online!

HallieQBrown.org

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Twitter](#)

#HQB2021