

Sentinel-Tribune

Forum addresses Critical Race Theory

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October 2nd, 2021

Two national conservative speakers addressed a crowd of about 100 on critical race theory in Perrysburg Schools, educating the group on campaign methods for use against school boards.

The speakers are part of the “Parents Know Best Tour.” The event took place on Sept. 19 at the Perrysburg Holiday Inn and featured FreedomWorks director of education reform Laura Zorc, Rev. C.L. Bryant, District 2 Ohio State Board of Education member Kirsten Hill and local school board candidates.

The group is against Critical Race Theory, which they acknowledge the Perrysburg district denies teaching. However, the speakers asserted that that Perrysburg programs for cultural intelligence are a part of “wokeness.”

The manual they passed out stated, “teaching critical race theory in K-12 classrooms is just about as close to indoctrination as it gets. When educators teach kids to think about everything through the lens of race during crucial years of development, when their ability to think for themselves has yet to be refined, it has the unintended consequence of dividing people even further.”

They also associate CRT with Marxism, socialism and communism, risking “turning our children over to the state,” Bryant said.

Perrysburg Schools have used programs in cultural intelligence, which the FreedomWorks speakers equate with another name for CRT.

The district administration also denies that assertion about their CQ CommUNITY, stating on their website “The team is dedicated to fostering the cultural intelligence (CQ) and equitable practices of school district employees, students and the community. The CQ CommUNITY supports the school district mission by working to ensure that all students’ diverse experiences, backgrounds and talents are supported, valued and respected.”

“For me, it crosses a line with cultural bias,” Zorc said.

“Teachers coming off college campuses have been soaked in this,” Hill added.

She called it training activists, not scholars, urging the attendees to join the Best: Building Education for Students Together movement being advocated by FreedomWorks.

Bryant talked about his core values.

“These are our children... These are not your children,” Bryant said, referring to the Perrysburg school board and teachers. “They must be afraid of you.

“If the school board doesn’t terminate the superintendent then you terminate the school board,” Bryant said.

He is a fiery speaker who energized the crowd. By the time he was done talking many were standing, clapping and interested in reading his books.

“The way we are going to change this is we have to change out our school boards,” Zorc said.

Based on a quick survey by the speakers about 30% of the group had attended a school board meeting.

Zorc advocates a four to six-year plan to change out school boards, replacing the members with candidates who represent their views. As part of their plan, FreedomWorks offers a 6-week course called the Best Parent Empowerment Kit. Some of the methods it includes are: organizing

press conferences, how to tackle school board meetings, creating letter writing campaigns and how to file ethics complaints.

“I’m hoping that people will do their own research and see where cultural intelligence has all of the tenets of CRT. I’m sure that there are some good things in it, but some of those good things already existed for decades, such as funding the kids whose families are poor and helping with the prom or participating in sports and recognizing families that are part of the military,” Ernie said. “Those kinds of things were happening before cultural intelligence and those things should continue. It’s just making sure the schools isn’t taking over the job of the parent and it’s making sure that they are educating our kids and not indoctrinating them on theories.”

FreedomWorks is a conservative political advocacy organization, sometimes described as a think tank, that has been aligned with the libertarian CATO Institute and the Tea Party. It is an outgrowth of the Koch brothers funded Citizens for a Sound Economy. It’s logo is frequently found with Fox News and BP Oil. The group publishes position papers from both the Republican and Democratic parties and advocates against many causes associated with the Democrats.

“FreedomWorks is the largest activist organization in the nation,” Bryant said. He and Zorc have “crisscrossed the nation,” with their messages.

About 100 people attended the free event, which was self-funded and not associated with the Northern Wood County Republican Club, for which Ernie is the president.

“It was non-political. I was doing it as an individual, because there were libertarians, Republicans, independents and some Democrats. We did not want it to appear political, because it’s not. It’s about the kids,” Ernie said. “We got donations there. We had a donation jar and that covered part of the cost of the room. The FreedomWorks people flew in on their own nickel. I did the marketing of the event.”