



# RESIST!

## #TRUTHBETOLD



### Sample Communications<sup>1</sup>

One way to activate your community is by expressing your objection to book bans, anti-CRT rhetoric, and educational gag orders. Below, you will find information about a few different forms of communication you can utilize: speaking before the school board, submitting written testimony and/or speaking before your state legislature or city council, writing your local legislators, and writing letters to the editor.

#### General Suggestions:

- Assess your audience** to determine the best approach to the issue. What would they value? What arguments would be the most effective? What connections can you make between your audience and the issue?
- Determine the purpose of your communication:** to inform, to convince, to reinforce, or to support. Your purpose will determine what information you place within your communication.
- Consider how familiar the audience is with the issue** to determine what background information you may need to provide your audience with so they can engage with the message.
- Be clear about what you support**, not just what you oppose. If you have suggestions, speak about them and how you think the suggestions will help make our communities thrive.
- Be succinct.** Clearly articulate your points using precise wording and brief explanations.

#### Speaking Before the School Board:

Before you attend a school board meeting, you should research your district's procedures for speaking before the board:

- How do you sign up to speak?
- What is the time limit for speaking?
- Can you speak about any subject, or are you limited to only speaking about topics on the board's agenda?

<sup>1</sup> Includes material from our partner, the MO Equity Education Partnership.

- Who are the members of the school board and what do their voting records indicate about what the members value for the students within the district?

In general, you should introduce yourself and explain your stake in the district and community, and then state your purpose for speaking before outlining your argument. *Remember to be brief and use precise wording.*

### Sample Speech:

Hi, my name is **INSERT NAME HERE** and I have lived in this district for **TIME PERIOD**. My children attend **NAME OF SCHOOL**.

I am here tonight to ask the board and the administrators to support diversity, equity, and inclusion in our schools. Equity education is as essential to our students as reading and math. Learning honest and inclusive history will lead our students to think more critically about the world and be more engaged in their own learning. It is important for our teachers and decision makers to understand that critical race theory is a prism through which we can evaluate and understand the systems that often inform and impact the experiences of many of our students, school employees, and community members.

It is imperative that all of our students feel seen, understood, and represented in our classrooms. This important goal requires having a diverse set of resources, lessons, and books in school libraries to reflect the lives of all kinds of students.

I know that the majority of the parents in our district want our schools to serve ALL students and understand the value of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the classroom. We love our schools and our kids and are thankful for our teachers, administrators, and volunteer school board members.

The small number of parents using anti-CRT rhetoric do not speak for me, nor my family, nor a large number of parents I know in this district. Thank you for your time.

### Submitting Written Testimony and/or Speaking Before the Legislation:

Each year, state legislators propose bills through the legislative process so they may possibly become law. Legislators use the feedback from constituents to learn about the impact of a bill's contents on individual lives, to assess the political climate and determine the viability of the bill, and discuss the fiscal and municipal implications of the legislation. For these reasons, it is imperative for constituents to engage with the legislative process long before a bill becomes law.

### Things to Know About the Process:

- Before the legislative session, look at pre-filings to determine what bills you are interested in supporting or opposing.
- Pay attention to what sub-committee the bill has been assigned to, then watch to see when they will schedule a hearing.
- Research the process for submitting written testimony or speaking before a committee once a hearing is scheduled for a particular bill. Be sure to follow that process exactly to ensure you get the opportunity to voice your support, your questions, or your concerns.
- Remember that whether writing or speaking, your communication becomes part of the public record in connection with that particular bill.
- Be sure to read the bill in its entirety and fully understand what the bill will do before you write your testimony.

Your written testimony can be as short as simply saying that you are in support or against the bill, but, whenever you can, be sure to include personal narratives that will demonstrate the potential impact of the bill on your life (but nothing confidential or identifying since it will be part of the public record).

### Sample testimony (in response to and actual bill filed in Missouri):

Hello, my name is **INSERT NAME**, and I am **ROLE, POSITION, OR IMPORTANT CONNECTION THAT EXPLAINS YOUR INTEREST IN THE LEGISLATION**.

I am here today to speak in **favor of (or against)** a **PARTICULAR ISSUE SUCH AS CRT OR THE SPECIFIC BILL NAME/NUMBER**. I am motivated by my belief in the ability of our citizens to support one another and uphold our social contract -- to focus not only on our rights, but our responsibilities to one another.

I am increasingly alarmed by the anti-CRT rhetoric and bills stating that, in discussing history, we could not name things for what they were or examine concepts through racial lenses. The attempts to silence educators from addressing race in the classroom means the following:

1. Because your bill states that we cannot identify “people, entities, or institutions as inherently, immutably, or systematically sexist, racist, biased, privileged, or oppressed,” we could not discuss any of the following: slavery the Holocaust, Japanese-American internment, the Trail of Tears, the Women’s Rights Movement or, the Civil Rights Movement.
2. We could not examine current or past events by “classifying persons into groups” or “defining a person’s identity.” This language would prohibit teaching about

then-Supreme Court Justice Roger Taney’s assertion in the Dred Scott decision that a black man “had no rights which the white man was bound to respect,” -- that people of African descent “are not included, and were not intended to be included, under the word ‘citizens’ in the Constitution, and can therefore claim none of the rights and privileges which that instrument provides for and secures to citizens of the United States”.

3. We could not assign “blame to categories of persons, regardless of the actions of particular individuals.” This language would prevent educators from not situate incidents like Germany’s Kristalnacht, Northern Ireland’s Bloody Sunday, or the murder of Emmet Till, or, more recently, Breonna Taylor’s murder into a greater cultural, social, and political context to assist students in better understanding from the past to build a better future.

The reality in our state is that, as much as we would like to say that everyone has the same opportunity for success, they do not. Data shows us that disparities continue across a number of metrics that impact educational success: funding, disciplinary actions, access to mental health care, trauma-informed educational techniques, access to resources, food security, and more. Just last week, the *New York Times* reported on [how a Black family’s home was undervalued in the appraisal process for a loan by nearly 40% of the same home staged with a white family, or nearly \\$300,000 less!](#)

When we consider all of these factors, critical race theory and equity in education becomes not just an *approach*, but an ethical imperative. We must do everything we can to support our students, and that means approaching equity from two perspectives: providing our teachers with a lens that injects fairness into their classrooms and student learning experiences, and ensuring our students have cultural competency skills in school and beyond, into their professional lives.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

### **Emails to Lawmakers:**

When writing to a legislator, you should understand the person’s understanding of the issue and their position. This research will influence how you present your stance and what information and data you include to support your viewpoint.

Before sending your letter, you should research the following information:

- Who your legislator is and their general position on the legislation
- Where their vote comes in the process. If they are on the committee, they will be voting on whether it will leave the committee to be presented to the general legislature.

- The practical implications of the legislation on your community

### Sample Email or Letter:

**DEAR LAWMAKER,**

As a resident of your district, I write to you today to ask for your support of any legislation that is designed to promote equity education in our schools and reject anti-CRT rhetoric and reject anti-CRT initiatives and legislation. Equity education is as essential to our students as reading and math, and learning accurate history will lead our students to think more critically about the world and be more engaged in their own learning. It is imperative that all of our students feel seen, understood, and represented in our classrooms. This imperative means having a diverse set of resources, lessons, and books in school libraries reflecting the lives of all kinds of students. Critical race theory is a prism that helps teachers and students not only understand our history and laws, but critical race theory is a tool that empowers teachers and students to interpret their experiences and encourages the creation of equitable solutions.

I would also ask you to vote against any legislation that threatens these values, including **INSERT BILL NAMES HERE**. A vote in favor of these bills is a vote to take a step backward, when those who elected you want our state to move forward — together. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

NAME

ADDRESS

### Writing a Letter to the Editor:

A few tips for writing your letter:

- Find out the requirements for submitting your letter: how to submit it, the word limit, etc.
- Before you begin writing, determine the purpose of your letter. Do you want to inform the readers about the issue? Do you want to persuade them to take a particular action? Do you want to encourage them to join a particular group or attend a special event? Whatever the reason, it should be clear to the audience as they begin to read.
- You must make your letter stand out from the other letters they receive each week. Begin with a compelling opening statement to immediately grab the attention of the reader.
- Be sure the information you provide to support your claims is accurate and relevant to your purpose.

### **Sample Letter to the Editor:**

A small minority of parents would have you believe there are educational activists writing lesson plans that brainwash and shame our kids with liberal ideology.

That is a dangerous untruth.

Our neighbors and friends are teaching our children, serving on school boards, and volunteering their time to serve our community. They aren't sitting behind a keyboard yelling about Marxism and socialism because they are bored and want something to whine about. Instead, they are doing work, good work, right here in our schools for ALL children, including those who are marginalized or require special accommodations. They do this because they value and love every child; they appreciate their students' inquisitive minds; and they have a strong passion to make a positive difference in kids' lives - nothing more, nothing less.

We should be thanking these school leaders for continuing to make our schools wonderful places to learn and develop, and for doing so in some of the most difficult circumstances one can imagine over the past two years. However, some parents would rather line up to scream and threaten school board members and teachers – their neighbors – for working endless hours doing a challenging job that frankly doesn't pay very well.

Enough is enough.

We don't need any people or organizations funded by private school companies undermining our schools. Keep that negativity from our school district, keep divisiveness away from our schools, and keep fear mongering away from our schools.

Sincerely,

NAME