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Attackers' Three-Pronged Strategy to Stop the Racial Reckoning

Defamation: Defame what CRT is and make it sound evil, scary, and an existential threat to white children. CRT = anti-white, anti-patriotic, and Communistic. Anyone promoting CRT and related ideas is identified as a “groomer” out to recruit/abuse your children.

Conflation: Once they have defamed CRT, they connect it to anything remotely tied to the values of racial justice, racial equality, and then to gender, LGBTQIA justice and equality. They remove any talk of racism, systemic oppression, structural discrimination, and concepts related to any of these ideas .

Cooptation: Once they have defamed and conflated, then they provide a civics curriculum that tells young people that despite structural inequalities, all they need is a commitment to personal responsibility and agency.

Who Are Critical Race Theory's Attackers

The far-right lobbyists and strategists leading the current attack on CRT are housed in dark-money funded think tanks like the Manhattan Institute, the Heritage Foundation, the CATO Institute, and the Federalist Society. They are connected by cross-state organizations like the State Policy Network and the American Legislative Exchange Council that enable copycat legislation to proliferate across the country. For example:

- **The Heritage Foundation**, a right-wing think tank funded by the Scaife and Koch networks, among others, has made “banning Critical Race Theory” one of their top two priority issues - the other being imposing voting restrictions.
- **The Judicial Crisis Network**, run by a protege of Leonard Leo (Chair of the Federalist Society), spent more than \$1 million on anti-CRT ads as of June 2021.

- **The Independent Women’s Forum**, a major “grassroots parent group” opposing CRT, has been funded by groups affiliated with the American Legislative Exchange Council and Betsy DeVos.
- **The Thomas W. Smith Foundation** has contributed at least \$12.7 million to organizations attacking CRT.
- **Most anti-CRT “parent-run, grassroots organizations,”** [have ties to these think tanks and their dark-money funders](#). The typical opponents of CRT also support initiatives such as voting restrictions, ending affirmative action, school choice, and other civil rights rollbacks. “Moms for Liberty,” for example, even [sought to ban elementary schoolchildren from reading “Martin Luther King, Jr. and the March on Washington” and “Ruby Bridges Goes to School.”](#) The attacks on CRT are brought to you by the same organizations that promoted eugenics, broken windows policing, attacks on bodily autonomy and the right to privacy, and school vouchers.

“We are right now preparing a strategy of laying siege to the institutions...waging war against American children and American families.”

– Christopher Rufo, 11/8/21, New York Times