



American Federation of Teachers, Local 212

Milwaukee Area Technical College
Affiliated with AFT, AFT-WI, AFL-CIO & MALC

AFT Local 212 Pledges to Tell the Truth

MATC Teacher's Union opposes anti-critical race theory legislation.

Milwaukee, WI, 9/2/2021

For immediate release

The American Federation of Teachers Local 212 opposes recent Republican efforts to punish Wisconsin's K-12 school districts, technical colleges and universities that teach critical race theory or that offer antiracism or antisexism training to their employees by cutting their funding aid.

Critical race theory and antiracism training are tools that educators can use to understand the history and experiences of not just white people, but of all people. Eliminating these tools from the education tool box serves a growing white supremacy movement that seeks to punish those who seek to create an inclusive society in which every individual has the opportunity to discover and develop their individual potential - whether in the classroom, worksite or our larger community.

As professional educators, we believe that it is our role in society to seek the truth by asking important questions, even if they are troubling, and giving students the tools they need to do the same. These attempts to stifle the free exploration of ideas, to control educators who are giving students the tools they need to understand their place in history, are motivated by fear. Speaking at the June 12 Milwaukee "Day of Action to Teach the Truth," Local 212 President Dr. Lisa Conley asked, "What is wrong with asking critical questions, or using a theoretical tool to help students understand their place in the world?"

Critical race theory has helped us understand how we have excluded the experience of Black Americans from the telling of our history. This theorizing has informed important work like the [1619 Project](#), and a broader examination of the [Tulsa race riots](#). It coincides with with growth of the [Black Lives Matter](#) movement that has led us to reexamine how police violence has been used as a tool to oppress Black people in the United States.

The politicization of these tools that have already helped us deepen our understanding of our own history is an attempt to use fear to gain political advantage and to silence those who have made it their life's work to teach others to ask questions, to think and to seek the truth.

Milwaukee Area Technical college is Wisconsin's most diverse higher education institution. As such, we, its front-line educators, can only interpret this attempt to silence us as an attack on our institution and our beloved students. Education is about more than just job skills, it's also an opportunity to understand who we are and what we have to offer the world. At Local 212, we believe that the potential of every human being must be recognized and helped to flourish. If recognizing that we have failed to live up to that goal causes discomfort, then that is a sign of necessary growth. The dream of a "more perfect union" is still ahead of us, and this work brings us closer to realizing it. We have nothing to fear by telling the truth.



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[American Federation of Teachers, Local 212](#) is the largest post-secondary teacher's union in the state and seeks to foster an equitable society by enriching, empowering and transforming the lives of MATC's students and educational professionals and to meet the needs of the communities that we serve.

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