



LENA C. TAYLOR

Wisconsin State Senator • 4th District

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FOR IMMEDIATE ADVISORY:

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For more information, contact:

Michelle Bryant, 608-266-5810

Senator Lena Taylor & Representative LaKeshia Myers Issue Joint Statement Regarding Senate Informational Hearing on Critical Race Theory

MADISON –Senator Lena Taylor (D-Milwaukee) and Representative LaKeshia Myers (D-Milwaukee) issued the following joint statement regarding the scheduled September 22nd Informational Hearing on Critical Race Theory, in the Senate Committee on Universities and Technical Colleges.

“I’d like to say it feels like Ward Connelly all over again, but the implications are far worse” stated Taylor. She said “While I appreciate the Informational Hearing, I don’t appreciate the addition of speakers like Chris Rufo, who has publicly inferred his desire to turn discussions of systemic racism into “a salient political issue with a clear villain. Translation – Black people who want an honest conversation and assessment of the impacts of slavery and their allies are the villain”.

Taylor continued “A Pennsylvania school district has now decided that a book on Rosa Parks is too controversial. Wisconsin has just mandated the teaching of the Jewish Holocaust in K-12 education, but now graduate level discussions of the systemic impact of race is problematic. It’s a scandal to discuss the inherent decision of the country to declare black people as three-fifths of a person and now want to understand whether that early disparate treatment shows up in other ways, today. Instead, it is more palatable to listen to Rufo, who has demonstrated a desire to take any topic connected to race, diversity, inclusion and equity and bastardize it. This is the new racist call to arms. But, we know how this story ends. The Civil War tore up this nation and resulted in the deaths of more than 750,000 people. That represented about 2.5% of the country’s population. Today, that would be about 7 million people. As we stroke fear, resentment, and give hate a platform, it is done at our own peril. The truth is difficult but it is also freeing. We can’t remain trapped in the denial that this country has made horrible mistakes on issues of race and we need to be honest about the lingering effects in many of our nation’s systems.”

Myers went on to say, “I find it interesting that the Committee on Universities and Technical Colleges has invited Chris Rufo of the Manhattan Institute to offer testimony. Rufo has openly stated his interest in using ‘Critical Race Theory’ as a political tool aimed at igniting the Republican base around the issue of race. Chris Rufo and his commentary on Critical Race Theory and diversity, equity, and inclusion training have been disparaged by the academic and journalistic community at large. His commentary on these subjects are dangerous and wrought with divisive political slant. If the committee is truly interested in learning the origins and theoretical framework of Critical Race Theory, I suggest they invite Professor Kimberle Crenshaw, a University of Wisconsin graduate, who is the most knowledgeable academic authority on the subject.”

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