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Letters to the editor

Anti-racism is not racism

"Openly racist ideology" is David Berti's characterization of the Lamorinda public schools DEI values (letter to the editor, April 27 Lamorinda Weekly). He attempts to convince that anti-racism is racism and that love is hate - as if truth can be false. He also proposes a resolution that would prevent the discussion of racism in school. This is especially disturbing considering the recent mass murder of black people in Buffalo by a racist white man - part of an enduring legacy of whites killing blacks.

Berti wants school districts to adopt a resolution to ensure students are judged as individuals rather than by "group stereotypes or averages." This sounds good on its face. But the aim is to protect white children from "discomfort, guilt, anguish . or any other form of psychological distress." It's so restrictive that it would stop accurate educating. He anticipates kids being distressed when learning about the catastrophic consequences of racism. I remember my early lessons about slavery, Jim Crow, and the Civil Rights movement. Of course, it was distressing to look at injustice and cruelty. That's normal. However, it was also inspiring to learn the ways black people overcame the violence and oppression.

We all have to come to terms with how we either perpetuate or reverse the effects of laws, policies, and beliefs that cause real harm to real people in our community. We might indeed need to face up to some difficult truths about how we may have benefited from laws and practices that put black and other Americans at a distinct disadvantage.

There are too many white people, like me, who live or lived in ignorance and silence, or who, like me, avoided recognizing the injustice and violence that result from a racist belief system. And who have also long dodged doing anything about it. I hope our kids can avoid real distress by learning the truth now and helping to bring racism to its eventual end.

Learning about racism doesn't harm kids or adults. It frees and inspires us to build a community where all belong, are safe, respected, and loved.

Todd Hollenberg
Lafayette

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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