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*Testimony before the Senate Committee on Government Operations, Legal Review and Consumer Protection
State Senator André Jacque
February 8, 2022*

Chairman Stroebel and Committee Members,

Thank you very much for holding this hearing on Senate Bill 410 and Assembly Bill 414.

Rep. Magnafici and I introduced this legislation to prevent politicization and discrimination in the training of state and local government employees and prohibit sex and race stereotyping in training provided to employees of local and state government, many of whom have contacted me with concerns about the promotion of racism and gender stereotyping foisted upon them in the workplace and utilization in state and local agency employment decisions. Government at all levels has spent millions of dollars ‘training’ government workers to assert divisive, anti-American propaganda, including events where public employees have been required to attend trainings where they are told that “virtually all white people contribute to racism” or where they are required to say that they “benefit from racism” or that there is racism embedded in the belief that America is the land of opportunity or the belief that the most qualified person should receive a job.

These types of ‘trainings’ not only run counter to the fundamental beliefs for which our nation has stood since its inception, but they also engender division and resentment within the workforce.

Under SB 410 and AB 414, a political subdivision or state agency is prohibited from requiring an employee to attend a training that teaches, advocates, acts upon, or promotes race or sex stereotyping. Among the concepts that are prohibited from being taught under the bill are that one race or sex is inherently superior to another race or sex and that an individual, by virtue of the individual’s race or sex, bears responsibility for acts committed in the past by other individuals of the same race or sex. Political subdivisions and state agencies are required to post on the Internet site of the subdivision or agency all training materials that are not required to be kept confidential.

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 410 and Assembly Bill 414.

CITY MANAGER

Tuesday, February 8, 2022
12:00 pm
201 Southeast

TESTIMONY
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, LEGAL REVIEW
AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

ASSEMBLY BILL 414 AND SEBATE BILL 410

RELATING TO ANTI-RACISM AND ANTI-SEXISM TRAINING FOR EMPLOYEES OF STATE AND
LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Dear Chair Senator Stroebel, Vice Chair Senator Felzowski and Honorable Members of the Committee on Government Operations, Legal Review and Consumer Protection:

The City of Beloit, WI values diversity, equity, inclusion and creating a sense of belonging for all. As such, we provide instructional opportunities for our employees that offer a historical perspective on issues related to race, gender, and other protected classifications. The City of Beloit does not stand for hate. Our trainings do not promote one group over the other; trainings are carefully considered to help our employees understand different backgrounds and experiences of the people we serve. Learning from history can be painful but it is necessary so that we learn from our mistakes. While a handful of individuals may be uncomfortable examining history and truth, free speech and history should not be squelched.

Understanding this history helps us understand implicit bias and other forms of discrimination that continue to exist in our current environment. I submit that such education is not based on stereotyping but an important educational aspect of creating a fully functional organization capable of serving a diverse population. No evidence has been offered to suggest any harm from these educational opportunities and yet, the potential of state shared revenues being withheld as proposed in the draft legislation is a very real and tangible threat.

The City Council - Manager form of government in Beloit, WI ensures that a non-partisan professional Manager oversees the day-to-day activities of municipal government as its chief executive officer, including issues related to human resources, budget & finance, etc. We need all available tools to appropriately educate our workforce without interference from unnecessary government restriction.

We implore the Committee to oppose Assembly Bill 414 and Senate Bill 410.

"Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it." -- Winston Churchill

Sincerely,



Clinton Anderson
Beloit City Council President



Lori S. Curtis Luther
Beloit City Manager

Presented by Teri Downing, Deputy Director of Community Development and Staff Liaison to the Beloit Equal Opportunities Commission.

NASW WI STATEMENT ON SENATE BILL 410 AND ASSEMBLY BILL 414

Senator Stroebel and members of the Senate Committee on Government Operations, Legal Review and Consumer Protection

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, Wisconsin Chapter, I am speaking in opposition to Senate Bill 410 and Assembly Bill 414.

As social workers we believe in promoting conditions, policies and practices that encourage respect for cultural and social diversity within the United States. Therefore as our state become more diverse, it becomes critical that our state and local employees learn how to understand and respect differences of their fellow workers, customers and clients. Being able to understand and respect differences means understanding the history of people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds and understanding how policies based upon race throughout our history have impacted African Americans, other ethnic and racial communities and caused the tremendous disparities of wealth in our country. This bill does nothing to advance understanding of people coming from different racial and ethnic groups and as I will mention later could have the impact of intimidating any discussion or training on these topics for state and local employees in a comprehensive manner.

Senate Bill 410 and Assembly Bill 414 propose to address a problem that does not exist. There is no evidence that Wisconsin state or local government is promoting race or sex stereotyping or teaching their employees that one race or sex is better than another race or sex or that one individual is responsible for the acts of other individuals of the same race or sex in the past. There is absolutely no evidence that state or local government employers are teaching their employees to hate each other or to hate white people.

The biggest danger from this bill is the unintended consequences of intimidating state and local government employers who are simply trying to help their employees understand and respect the different racial and ethnic backgrounds and experiences of their fellow employees and the Wisconsin residents who they help every day. We don't need and should never have speech codes in our state and local governments. We also don't need to encourage, sanction and support law suits or civil actions against our local and state government because an employee is uncomfortable with a training.

If you read the fine print of this bill you could be seen as violating the law if you discuss such concepts as implicit bias, affirmative action or any topic that could lead state or local government employees to feel discomfort, guilt, anguish or other form of psychological distress. By logical extension Germany's teaching of the Holocaust would be illegal as it almost certainly has made German students feel discomfort, guilt and anguish about Germany's responsibility for the Holocaust.

In order to best serve our diverse state we need well-trained state and local employees who can sensitively provide outstanding service to all our diverse residents.

Please vote down Senate Bill 410 and Assembly Bill 414.

Marc Herstand, MSW CISW,
Executive Director
National Association of Social Workers, Wisconsin Chapter



WISCONSIN FAMILY ACTION
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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF ASSEMBLY BILL 414/SENATE BILL 410
SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS,
LEGAL REVIEW & CONSUMER PROTECTION – TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2022
JULAIN K. APPLING, PRESIDENT**

Thank you, Chairman Stroebel and committee members, for the opportunity to speak in support of Senate Bill 410 and its Assembly companion, AB 414, which prohibits training of Wisconsin's state and local government employees in sex and race stereotyping, which is found in popular Critical Race Theory-based training across America.

While this bill does not use the term "Critical Race Theory," the components the bill addresses are part of what is commonly and popularly referred to as "Critical Race Theory" or CRT. Thus, we believe it is appropriate to address this topic and use this term as we discuss this bill.

Critical Race Theory is deeply rooted in Marxism and is one of the biggest threats to fundamentally changing our Republic. Proponents of CRT make race the lens through which we are to view all aspects of American life. CRT views our government and our laws as systemically racist, uses identity politics, which weakens the public and private bonds that serve as a foundation of trust and allow for civic engagement, and seeks to destroy the people's sovereignty by allowing government to become a dictatorship.

Critical Race Theory, like many movements that are designed to destroy our Republic, evolved from ivory tower philosopher-academics, and has permeated Main Street America, shaping the way we ordinary people think. We are bombarded with dialogue about CRT in social media, in corporate boardrooms, K-12 classrooms, in both public entities and private business diversity training, and even in church. Not only has the CRT journey made record time from think tanks to dinner tables, but it is also gas lighting racial tensions and deepening our divide.

It is important to recognize that CRT holds to the idea that:

1. **There is no absolute truth**—only competing narratives. It sees "lived experiences" as mattering more than facts.
2. **Individuals are either an oppressor or victim.** You are predetermined by immutable characteristics such as race to fall into either category. Culture is defined by groups exercising power over each other.
3. **America is systemically racist and must be dismantled.** It sees America as having been founded on the system of capitalism, which it asserts is racist, and therefore must be disrupted.

True equality will be achieved by maximizing the opportunities for Americans to become self-sufficient, not by dividing Americans on the basis of race and doling out resources based on skin color.

If CRT is implemented in our key institutions, its social policies will continue to erode the key preconditions for advancement—family, education, and work.

Training content for all state and local government must not use the goal of promoting diversity of thought as a reason to indoctrinate employees to see the world, and America in particular, through a racial lens.

Training content should use instructional content that creates a shared sense of national identity – America belongs to *all* Americans and that our nation's progress is worth celebrating.

Training content should highlight the foundational principles of our constitution: equality of all humans with equal protection under the law.

Policy makers at the local and state levels, in addition to business leaders, and community leaders, should be champions of rebuilding the institutions of family, education and the workplace so that all citizens can overcome the barriers to self-sufficiency regardless of skin color.

We live in the greatest country in the world; one that has spent its existence to better itself for the sake of its citizens and with an overabundance of generosity to fellow humans around the globe. But it is becoming increasingly more difficult to recognize the land of the free that our many of our brave have made the ultimate sacrifice to defend and protect.

Our nation's constitution is predicated on the assumption that all men and women are created equal. Period. While we have not been a perfect nation, and we have long acknowledged many of our saddest wrongdoings, we have made and continue to make great progress in our short life as a country, which deserves both celebration and commitment to continued improvement of the best example of government. The best example of government is that which is committed to making sure state and local government employees are not subjected to training that undermines America, discriminates against people based on race, demands people of certain races apologize for the race they were created as a part of, and subjects certain people to imposed guilt for wrongdoings in which they have had absolutely no part. That's about as un-American as we can imagine.

Opponents will say CRT is a figment of fertile conservative imaginations, but their reaction to our concerns remind me of the famous line from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: "The lady doth protest too much, me thinks." CRT is real and dangerous. Training local and state government officials in this insidious ideology, using taxpayer funds no less, cannot be allowed.

Senate Bill 410/Assembly Bill 414 will help ensure that such training sessions do not happen. We urge support in the committee and that the bill be sent to the full Senate in a timely way for a vote.

Thank you for your thoughtful and careful attention to our position on this bill. I am available for questions, should you have any.



WISCONSIN COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

Testimony

To: Members of the Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities
From: Ian Henderson, Policy and Systems Director, (WCASA)
Date: February 8, 2022
Re: Senate Bill 410/Assembly Bill 414
Position: Oppose

The Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA) appreciates the opportunity to offer this written testimony for your consideration. WCASA is a hybrid organization: functioning both to support member Sexual Assault Service Providers (SASPs), while advancing the anti-sexual assault movement in the state and nationally.

We oppose this legislation as it seriously undermines sexual violence prevention efforts for state/local government employees. Anti-racism and anti-sexism are at the heart of sexual violence prevention programming. Social norms that are associated as risk factors for sexual violence include racism along with gender socialization, which includes a rigid adherence to traditional gender roles about masculinity and femininity. In contrast, anti-racist training builds empathy in people, which is a protective factor for sexual violence, by helping individuals understand the world from another's point of view. Similarly, anti-sexist training seeks to counter an individual's adherence to traditional gender norms, thus counteracting that risk factor for sexual violence.

However, this bill prohibits trainings on a variety of topics, including concepts that might cause "discomfort, guilt, anguish, or psychological distress" in state/local employees, as well implicit bias. While racism and sexism are by their very nature uncomfortable topics, that is not a reason to avoid examining their root causes, such as internalized racial and male superiority. Additionally, in testimony submitted by the author of similar legislation addressing anti-racist instruction in schools, educational content that uses terms like "social and emotional learning, "cultural competence", "systemic racism", would apparently be banned. We believe the language in this bill is so broad that it could cause state and local governments to refrain from providing anti-racist and anti-sexist training to their employees, which will be extremely detrimental to sexual violence prevention efforts.

However even if state/local governments do continue to offer anti-racist and anti-sexist trainings to their employees, this legislation significantly weakens sexual violence prevention education by limiting the type of information that can be discussed in that programming. It is simply not possible to have effective sexual violence prevention instruction when you are unable to address internalized racial and male superiority.

For the reasons state above, WCASA opposes SB 413/AB 414, and we urge this committee to take no further action on this legislation. Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, you can reach me at ianh@wcasa.org.