

From: John Kretschmar **Redacted**
Sent: Friday, July 9, 2021 4:28 PM
To: Jack Stark
Subject: Regent Pillen's CRT proposal

Non-NU Email

Regent Stark -- I just retired after a 44 year career with UNO. I headed the William Brennan Institute for Labor Studies for 41 of those years, which is part of UNO's College of Public Affairs and Community Service.

The Nebraska and American labor movement believes that "an injury to one is an injury to all" and that "we all do better when we all do better." Both are consistent with the nation's founding credo that each of us is born equal and is endowed with inalienable rights.

While the founding credo is a great ideal, the public policy that has come from all levels of government has been at odds with it. The Constitution is filled with compromises that the Founders thought necessary to insure that at least 9 states ratified the document.

The idea of chattel slavery, where human beings were owned, bred, and sold to make a profit is unlike that elsewhere in history...that I am aware of...is ignored as such but is, in my opinion, part of the institutional racism that still pervades too much of public policy. The 3/5 compromise likewise was a compromise the Founders made to help the document more acceptable to Southern States.

The founders "punted" on establishing qualifications for voting in federal elections to the states. State constitutions typically said that white, male, property-owners had the right to vote. They were a small part of the "We the People" that we learn about in our public schools.

The first law dealing with Naturalized Citizens, in 1790, held that only free white people could become one!

Time after time, when dealing with race, public policy has disadvantaged one group while opening doors for others. The way the GI Bill limited Black vets in the location of where they could purchase a home has had long lasting repercussions in terms of white and black family wealth.

So when talking about Critical Race Theory (CRT), Regent Pillen is unable to come up with a clear definition of what it and what it

will do that frightens him. To pass a resolution, it's important to know what you are voting on.

My definition focuses on institutional racism and its affects on making the American Dream harder for some groups to have a fair shot at the American Dream. That is exactly what the National Advisory Commission on National Disorders (a.k.a. the Kerner Commission) said in its 1968 investigation to the events in Detroit and Newark in 1967.

So my understanding of CRT is that it lays out the understanding that institutional racism creates the situation where there are advantages for the white population over an above those experience by people of color in the same social, political and economic spaces. It is different than individual prejudice or individual racism because the person benefitting from the advantage may not be racist or prejudiced. In fact, they may be totally unaware of having any privileges that are reserved for whites.

I am old enough to have been an adult in Detroit in 1967. My first job out of college was teaching on the South Side of Chicago as a substitute teacher. Both experiences opened my eyes to institutional racism...although I was unable to label it that way at the time.

It was later, working for an Interfaith Center for Racial Justice in Grosse Pointe, Michigan that I finally made myself familiar with the Kerner Commission Report. It suggested that white folks talk to other white folks who were in charge of the institutions that meted out opportunities unequally. And that is what I and the Center's director did. We did adult education for the members of the churches of the area. We challenged the TV station licenses to insure that they were programming for the entire metro community. We used the U.S. Civil Rights guidelines to examine the social studies texts used in the public schools. We monitored the court system to document the unequal application of justice. And we found "testers" who would evaluate the ability of whites and blacks to purchase home in Grosse Pointe.

Why? Because a person has to be aware of the current state of things, if as a nation we work to create a nation "with liberty and justice for ALL."

BTW, that Interfaith Center director was recruited by a fellow named Hubert Locke. Dr. Locke was brought to UNO to start the Goodrich Scholarship Program...a program to help those who had the ability to succeed in college, but who faced economic challenges that made

Regent Stark, I hope I can count on you to oppose the resolution sponsored by Regent Pillen. And I hope you ask him for a clear definition of CRT and how it does more than merely speak to the real and historic barriers that people of color face when working toward the American Dream.

Thanks for your attention to this matter.

John Kretzschmar

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