

DeSantis's Assault on History

Michael K. Cantwell

A protestor demanding that the Palm Beach County school board remove “White Advantage” from its Equity Statement insisted she wouldn’t allow anyone to “teach my child to be ashamed of his race.” Our grandstanding governor calls Critical Race Theory “the practice of ‘teaching kids to hate their country and to hate each other.’”

Like the cartoon character below, the protestor has no understanding what she is opposing, but she is sure it’s dangerous because someone told her so. Of course, education *can* be dangerous, but the real danger is to those whose ability to rule depends upon an ignorant and easily duped public.

And that is the basis of Governor DeSantis’s crusade against Critical Race Theory, something that is not even being taught in Florida schools. He is not just pandering to Trump’s base, who *choose* ignorance; he is attempting to *enforce* ignorance by preventing Florida students from being educated in American history.

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BY THE NUMBERS

Prison versus Population Population By Race (2018)

Race	Total Pop. %	Prison Pop. %
Black	12%	33%
Latinx	16%	23%
White	63%	30%

Upcoming DCDB Meetings (7:00 PM)

July 8: Civics and Civics Education, with Guest Speaker Christene Campbell-Gabor

August 12: Guest speaker Omari Hardy, Florida State Rep. District 88

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Although there is no universally agreed-upon definition of CRT, the one offered by Marisa Iati of *The Washington Post* is [concise](#) and gives the lie to the hysterical fearmongering expressed above:

Critical race theory is an academic framework centered on the idea that racism is systemic, and not just demonstrated by individual people with prejudices.

CRT first emerged in the 1970s as academics sought to understand why the Civil Rights era had produced far fewer gains for African Americans than anticipated. For example, the fact that Black families currently possess 10% of the wealth of White families has been shown to result from (1) racist zoning laws and [redlining](#) by banks that barred Black families from acquiring homes in neighborhoods where wealth would accumulate; and (2) targeting of Black families for subprime loans during the leadup to the housing crisis. Similarly, to take just another example, we now understand how the so-called War on Drugs is responsible for the overrepresentation of African Americans in America's prison population, thanks to Michelle Alexander's rigorously researched book, *The New Jim Crow*.

Instruction on the required topics must be factual and objective, and may not suppress or distort significant historical events, such as the Holocaust, and may not define American history as something other than the creation of a new nation based largely on universal principles stated in the Declaration of Independence.

Only a propagandist schooled in the works of Orwell and Goebbels would agree to teach that such shameful episodes in American history as slavery, the Civil War, post-Reconstruction white terrorism, and Jim Crow, among others, are consistent with "universal principles stated in the Declaration of Independence." The unacceptable alternative for an educator is to remove such episodes from the curriculum entirely. Also note that the Holocaust is deemed a significant historical event but slavery is not. This goes beyond mere pandering and represents an attempt to divide the Democrats' two most loyal constituencies.

DeSantis's intent is to force the Democratic Party to choose between White Democrats "uncomfortable" with the assertion that the color of their skin provides them with advantages and Black Democrats who live the truth of that assertion every day.

It is obvious where and with whom the Democratic Party must stand. It would be intellectually dishonest

Their phony crusade against CRT is the wagon to which Republicans have hitched their hopes to win at the polls in 2022 what they failed to win at the polls in 2020 and failed to steal on January 6, 2021.

CRT attracted little attention outside academia until recently – indeed the term was mentioned on Fox News shows only 132 [times](#) in 2020. Now, the latest entry in the culture wars, it has already been mentioned 1,860 [times](#) on Fox in 2021.

Their phony crusade against CRT is the wagon to which Republicans have hitched their hopes to win at the polls in 2022 what they failed to win at the polls in 2020 and failed to steal on January 6, 2021. As such, Republican demonization of CRT is the gravest threat currently facing our democracy since Trump descended his golden escalator. If DeSantis is reelected, he becomes the leading candidate for the role of "Trump with a brain" that crypto-fascists dream about and Democrats dread.

What began with the lie that CRT is being taught in Florida schools has morphed into a requirement to teach lies or remain silent. The new education [directive](#) reads as follows:

and morally gutless to pretend that we are a colorblind society in which everyone is equally advantaged. A starter list of those advantages, extracted from an excellent [article](#) by Jon Greenberg appears on the back cover of this newsletter, but there's an easier way to settle the issue if you are White and you are honest. Simply ask yourself whether, were it possible, you'd choose to push a magic button and permanently become Black. I suspect that there would be few takers. I know I would lack the courage to do so.

We will be hearing an incessant drumbeat of "White Advantage" and "Critical Race Theory" over the next year, and why not? The principal reason Biden has only the narrowest of margins in the Senate is because of the field day Republicans had with "Defund the Police" and "Abolish ICE." That they were able to do so was because of the chasm between the actual and the literal meaning of both terms and our failure to close that gap.

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(DeSantis's Assault on History, continued from page 2)

As we head into the midterms, it is critical not only *how* we play defense but *that* we play offense. “White Advantage” is undeniable and well-documented, as is the fact that racism is woven into our legal and other systems. It does not mean that every White person is a racist or that everything he or she has achieved in life was unearned, but it is a significant leg up and that should be acknowledged.

It also does not mean that we can ignore the fact that there are other forms of privilege, such as being born into a middle- or upper-middle-class family that emphasizes education. Poor Whites are likely to bristle at the use of the term “White Advantage,” claiming that it was not enough to lift them into the middle class.

While their resentment may make them unreachable, we must try to explain that their economic situation is being caused by Republicans who exploit their anger as a campaign strategy and then do nothing to help them once elected. In contrast, Democrats work to help the poor and middle class. Republicans have played poor Whites against Blacks since [Bacon's Rebellion](#), and it is high time to end that charade.

As for Critical Race Theory, we should be playing offense. DeSantis's ban on teaching CRT is not only an assault on history but an assault on democracy that would have done Joe Stalin proud. Yale history professor Timothy Snyder argues as much in a recent [essay](#) and offers the following response to those concerned that receiving an education in American history might cause discomfort for some students:

History is not therapy, and discomfort is part of growing up. As a teacher, I cannot exclude the possibility, for example, that my non-Jewish students will feel psychological distress in learning how little the United States did for Jewish refugees in the 1930s. I know from my experience teaching the Holocaust that it often causes psychological discomfort for students to learn that Hitler admired Jim Crow and the myth of the Wild West. Teachers in high schools cannot exclude the possibility that the history of slavery, lynchings and voter suppression will make some non-Black students uncomfortable. The new memory laws [such as the one rammed through by DeSantis] invite teachers to self-censor, on the basis of what students might feel — or say they feel. The memory laws place censorial power in the hands of students and their parents. It is not exactly unusual for white people in America to express the view that they are being treated unfairly; now such an opinion could bring history classes to a halt.

If Manchin Is the Enemy, Wait Until You Get McConnell

Rob Resnick

Many Democrats, at least those in Congress, appear focused on West Virginia Senator Joe Manchin. They continuously challenge his stances on important issues and his desire to work across the aisle to build consensus or more broad-based support for legislation as well as his resistance to end the filibuster rule. It is more than fair to hold different opinions and work to bring Manchin into the fold. However, to consider him the “enemy” is foolhardy. He represents his constituents in a state that voted over 2 to 1 for Trump. More importantly, without Manchin, West Virginia will most assuredly send a conservative, perhaps another Trumpist, and Democrats would lose the Senate. Mitch McConnell is lurking around the corner.

To be fair, Senator Manchin is not the only Democratic voice of hesitation, he is simply the one willing to stand up and express his views. There are at least several Democratic Senators and a group of House Democrats that disfavor using mechanisms such as budget reconciliation to avoid the normal process. Although Manchin is wrong to oppose the voting rights legislation, he is correct in trying to build consensus on legislation. Bills passed strictly

on party line are highly likely to be repealed when the majority shifts. This worked to the detriment of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), as Republicans tried endlessly to repeal it and came dangerously close to succeeding. Hate it as we might, we must anticipate that Republicans may regain control of the Senate and/or the House. This must be the priority.

It is essential to win in more states and at a minimum put more states in play and force Republicans to compete. Democrats cannot win Congressional majorities, certainly workable ones, without winning most of the swing districts and races in swing states. To do this, we can advocate for our core values and explain why they are good for the nation. Demonstrate that we can enact these policies and programs while being fiscally responsible (to include re-assessing corporate taxes and taxes on the mega wealthy). Progressive values with a moderate voice. However, Democrats lost most of the swing House districts in 2020, along with some winnable Senate seats, and must reconcile that failure before 2022.

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(If Manchin is the Enemy, Continued from page 3)

Two essential commitments are required for Democrats to control both houses of Congress, both of which are critical to obtaining the support of enough voters across the nation. First, Democrats must embrace moderates as well as progressives. To control Congress, Democrats need Senators like Joe Manchin, Kyrsten Sinema, et al, who can win in red states. Every state gets two and there are more red states than blue states. Do the math. Second, Democrats must convince the country that we are the responsible party. Democrats must be seen as the party of good, smart governance. Themes of

their planning and attracting angry misinformed individuals manipulated by desperate, despicable leaders like Trump, Cruz, Hawley, Jordan, Gohmert, Gosar, and too many more to name. The peril displayed by that calamity continues to threaten our democracy and the functioning of government. They still believe Trump will be “reinstated” and when this does not occur there is a strong chance of additional violence and insurrection. As much as people want to minimize or limit the impact of January 6, the dangerous truth is that our country remains at risk.

Democrats need to embrace the largest ideological tent in party history to ensure electoral support and

While the battle used to be about policy, it is now a fight between authoritarianism and democracy.

“socialism” and “defund the police” regardless of inaccuracy, were highly effective and almost led to Republicans sweeping 2020.

There is more on the line than ever before. While the battle used to be about policy, it is now a fight between authoritarianism and democracy. Republicans have blatantly enacted massive voter suppression legislation across the country that are so extensive that neither voting rights bill currently being debated in Congress even addresses the most dangerous and extreme provisions. These are open attempts to “win” elections and maintain power at any cost based on the ability to prevent the votes of millions of eligible voters. Republicans demonstrated a willingness to trample over the Constitution and negate a free press, prevent lawful dissent, and abuse government institutions as agents of their political power. The threat is real.

The horror we witnessed in January was not a one-time assembly of zealots. This was planned for decades, at least in the case of multiple extremist/supremacist groups, who were effective at concealing

successful campaigns. When voters see the Democratic Party (whether or not accurate) as moving too far to the left, they lean more to Republicans and Republicans win the swing districts obtaining Congressional majorities. Often the party seen as more extremely partisan loses voter support. Although Republicans clearly abused the budget reconciliation process to pass bills in the Senate that lacked sufficient support, Democrats must tread very carefully in doing the same, lest they risk voter backlash. This is especially true if voters perceive reckless spending, a likely consequence of this tactic and pronounced Republican campaign messaging.

We must not demand perfect candidates or ideological fealty only to lose races. Every campaign must be competitive, and Republicans should have to work hard and commit resources in every race. Republican voter suppression means Democrats must win an even greater percentage of the vote in more places. Every House and Senate seat makes a difference. Not just for a Democratic majority, but for the future of the nation as a democracy. Welcome Joe Manchin as well as Elizabeth Warren.

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Be Afraid, Be Very Afraid

Michael K. Cantwell

When Franklin Delano Roosevelt took the oath of office, the country was mired in the depths of the Great Depression, with 25% of the nation's workers unemployed and millions of Americans homeless. In his inaugural address he spoke frankly of the challenges facing the country but insisted that they could be overcome:

This great Nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper. So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.

And they were overcome. Armed with the hope and resolve FDR provided, and protected by the safety net programs created under his administration, we emerged from the pit of the Great Depression stronger than ever, and we created a middle class that was once the envy of the world. That middle class has been disappearing for the last four decades, and what remains of it is more to be pitied than envied.

All this is the work of the modern Republican Party, which has turned FDR's famous maxim on its head. For them, "fear itself" is not a crippling emotion to be avoided but an electoral tool to be employed. It is fitting that their political philosophy is best summarized by the horror-film tagline, "be afraid, be very afraid."

Republicans have neither ideas nor programs to offer voters, and their platform is at odds with what polls say voters want, but they excel at fearmongering. It worked in the 1980s, the early aughts, and 2016, and it will be the centerpiece of the reelection campaigns of Marco Rubio and Ron DeSantis.

The "nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror" about which FDR warned may be the Republicans' only tool (other than voter suppression of course), but it is a highly effective one. They may be clueless about governing and their insouciance about serving the public would do Marie Antoinette proud (viz. Katrina, the mortgage meltdown, and the pandemic), but they'll keep getting elected in Florida so long as enough people fall prey to their lies. It's your choice:

- Be afraid of "illegal aliens." Or understand that the proper term is "undocumented immigrants," that they take jobs no native-born Americans want, and that they commit fewer crimes than either documented immigrants or native-born Americans commit. But "be afraid."
- Be afraid of "critical race theory." Or understand that it's not being taught in Florida and that the real threat is the new Republican education [directive](#) that literally bars teaching about slavery and its horrors. See p. 2, column 2.
- Be afraid of "socialism." Or understand that's how Republicans demonized Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and the Affordable Care Act. Are you a socialist if you refuse to give up these benefits?

Today, however, there *is* something to fear other than fear itself. There is a very real possibility that their voter suppression laws and fearmongering will allow Republicans to recapture Congress in 2022 and overthrow what is left of our democracy in 2024. That is not "a nameless, unreasoning unjustified terror which paralyzes" but rather a well-defined, wholly justified dread that must stimulate us to act as if our world depends upon it—because it does.

Our Grandstanding Governor*

Michael K. Cantwell

Our grandstanding governor wants to spend our tax dollars to send police to Texas and Arizona to help two other grandstanding governors "protect our borders." He has no idea how much this will cost and beyond his say-so there's no evidence that this expense has anything to do with protecting Floridians.

If Gov. Ron DeSantis were interested saving the lives of Floridians instead of cheap political stunts, he would take advantage of the Medicaid expansion available under the Affordable Care Act. The federal government pays 95% of the cost, and it would save thousands of Floridians from dying prematurely and unnecessarily.

According to [a 2019 study](#) by the non-partisan Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the refusal of Florida governors and legislators to expand Medicaid has caused nearly 3,000 such unnecessary deaths over four years. Their blood is on the hands of DeSantis, Rick Scott, and their minions in the legislature.

*Originally published in The Sun-Sentinel, June 16, 2021.

The Republicans Got Sick and Tired of Democracy, So They're Trying to Kill It

June Sandra Neal

Democracy just wasn't working for the Republicans. There were increasing numbers of Black and Brown people (White majority forever!), a road to citizenship for immigrants (they can't even speak English!), and tree-huggers squawking like Chicken Little about climate change (Hillary took our coal!). And the greatest proof that the system stank: the election of a Black president.

So, one day, they loaded up their long guns (they had stocked up because Obama was going to raid their homes and snatch their weapons) and went searching for something new. They spotted a big manhole plate covering a sewer and lifted it. At first the stench was overwhelming, and they pulled back. But then, out popped a hand, then an arm, then a head with orange hair combed in such a convoluted maze even Erno Rubik couldn't figure it out.

But they found their guy! Racist, dumb, an expert swindler and a prolific liar. So, they nominated him to run for the presidency.

At first, some Republicans and even a few conservative columnists were apoplectic.

Lindsey Graham: "You know how you make America great again? Tell Donald Trump to go to hell. He's a race-baiting, xenophobic, religious bigot...He's the ISIL man of the year." (CNN, Dec. 8, 2015.)

Ted Cruz: "This man is a pathological liar...he lies practically every word that comes out of his mouth..." and "He's a narcissist at a level I don't think this country's ever seen." (Politico, Sept. 2016.)

Marco Rubio: "Donald Trump has been perhaps the most vulgar — no, I don't think perhaps — the most vulgar person to ever aspire to the presidency ..." (CNN, March 4, 2016.)

George Will, the darling of all conservative columnists: "This unraveling presidency began with the Crybaby-in-Chief banging his spoon on his highchair tray to protest a photograph — a *photograph* — showing that his [inauguration crowd](#) the day before had been smaller than the one four years previous. Since then, this weak person's idea of a strong person, this chest-pounding advertisement of his own gnawing insecurities, this low-rent Lear raging on his Twitter-heath has proven that the phrase malignant buffoon is not an oxymoron." (Washington Post, June 1, 2020. *This column is a must-read.*)

But, when Trump won, these critics (except for Will) flipped their "principles" faster than hotcakes and promised to bring Trump MacDonald's burgers every morning.

(Their flipping was no loss, since their "principles" were the nutritional equivalent of Jell-O.)

Now we got a new, semi-fascist government (after all, it takes time), run by a mafia of thugs, thieves and unctuous factotums, all tripping over their feet to show fealty to this crazed narcissist. His litany of crimes grew daily, but the worst crime of all was his embrace of enemy foreign dictators—always for his personal benefit. After Russia hacked our 2016 elections, CNN's Anderson Cooper was shocked watching Trump at the Helsinki summit turn against US intelligence agencies and side with Vladimir Putin. "This was the most disgraceful performance at a Summit with a Russian leader...that I've ever seen." (July 16, 2018, CNN)

When Joe Biden won in 2020, Trump waged war to hang on to his seat. Smart move, since he still had lots of business deals with foreign governments in the works. And he was facing criminal charges once out of the protection of the presidency.

First, he tried to overturn a free and fair election with baseless lawsuits. He phoned Georgia election officials asking to steal some votes. (Really.) He sent a horde of costumed lunatics to the Capitol building to violently stop the Constitutionally mandated certification of the election.

The concomitant plagues of Covid and Trump seemed biblical. Yet, as frightening as the past four years were, they augured something worse: half the country believing Trump won the election, losing faith in the democratic system and substituting inane conspiracy theories. State Republicans enacted voter repression laws—No Water for Grandma Standing in Line—and are whitewashing American History in our schools—no talk of racism allowed.

Next elections, Democratic victories on all levels will be the only insurance that our democracy will survive. Just staving off the barbarians at the gate will be tough, but we can win by changing the political playbook. We can work around the voting restrictions, make the (blue) District of Columbia a state, eliminate gerrymandering, work toward a national popular vote, and change our Byzantine primary system. Remember what's at stake.

Biden's First Foray – New Focus on National Security

Rob Resnick

In his first European visit, President Biden restored the US presence and traditional role with NATO, the G7, and our relationship with Putin's Russia. He also established a strong US/EU plan for China and other challenges. The lingering question for our allies, for which we may not have an answer until after the 2024 and 2028 Elections, is whether this is a permanent return or whether the US may again turn to Trumpism that will again seek to threaten these critical alliances. Nevertheless, it was easy to see the huge relief in every attendee to welcome the traditionalist Biden in place of the isolationist Trump, who sought to destabilize and dismantle our strategic alliances and partnerships. That alone was a significant victory for the trip.

Each segment of the trip- NATO, G7, and Putin Summit - were crucial successes for Biden and the US. Remember under Trump when the result of just about every such meeting was abject failure. Setting aside the expected differences over policies and priorities, Trump had proven himself not just wholly inept and shamefully uninformed, but an actual threat to our own national security. Trump routinely subordinated himself to Putin, inexplicably doing Putin's bidding. He accepted all of Russia's aggression against independent nations, interference in our elections, etc., all while attempting to weaken if not demolish NATO and our international partnerships with European and Asian allies. Remember the horror in Helsinki...

Biden reestablished the US as the leader of the alliance. He began with an emphatic, unquestionable commitment to Article 5, which states that an attack on any one member of NATO is an attack on every member and the entire alliance pledges their support. Every member reaffirmed its commitment. They went further, by declaring that cyber-attacks were part of Article 5. This is critical because cyber warfare and related matters are the modern focus of international conflict and may often be immediately more impactful to the victim nation. NATO coming together to respond to ongoing cyber-attacks is critical. Along those lines, Biden led the alliance to a joint recognition of the roles China and Russia play in world conflict and instability with joint policy addressing those challenges. The NATO alliance is solid and US leadership is once again central.

The G7 reached consensus on addressing ongoing Chinese violations, infrastructure challenges,

climate change, and the pandemic, etc. The key is that the effort will be in concert with all G7 nations. The group of nations reached significant consensus on collectively tackling these profound worldwide challenges and doing so to represent the power of democracy over authoritarianism, freedom over repression. Although China had penetrated parts of Europe as the next phase of its long-term program to create conditions where every region of the world is reliant on and beholden to China, under renewed US leadership, the G7 will again defend the world from Chinese hegemony.

The Biden-Putin summit was a critical reset of US-Russia relations. After four years of Trump subjugating himself to Putin and operating against US national interests it was crucial for Biden to personally inform Putin that his dominance of Trump and US policy was over (well, perhaps he still owns Trump). This was not a stage to unveil a new treaty or major agreement, but rather an opportunity to establish proper communication, expectations, and understanding priorities. Biden made clear how the US views continued Russian interference in elections, direction of or support for significant cyber-attacks, regional aggression against independent nations, dissidents, etc. There is no doubt Putin left the meetings understanding that Biden and the US will meaningfully respond to continued Russian transgressions. Mission accomplished.

With just a few months in office and after his first international trip, Biden has gone a long way to restoring the US's rightful and traditional place in the world and as leader of our alliances. Any one of these meetings would be incredibly mentally and physically grueling for any President; Biden demonstrated that he is up to the task. He was strong, focused, capable, and effective throughout each phase of the trip. The essential follow-on from these meetings is to reassure our justifiably nervous allies that the US is back and Trumpism is gone. This vital and daunting priority is made all the more difficult when people around the world see the seditionist insurrection of January 6, 2021, continuous Republican efforts to conceal the truth and foment discord with their "Big Lie" and efforts to prevent lawful citizens across the country from voting in order to steal elections and power. It appears the biggest threat to democracy remains the one at home...

(Some of) What We're Reading

Frank Cerabino, *Palm Beach Post*, "[Florida made its mark at the Jan. 6 Capitol riot](#)": "About 1 in 10 of the people charged in that violent insurrection to overturn the results of a certified election, an insurrection that injured 140 officers and sent members of Congress scurrying for their lives, were from Florida, according to a USA Today analysis." *File this one under "Florida Men"*

Jon Greenberg, *Everyday Feminism*, "[10 Examples That Prove White Privilege Exists in Every Aspect Imaginable](#)" (list extracted from article): (1) The Privilege of Having A Positive Relationship With the Police, Generally; (2) The Privilege of Being Favored By School Authorities; (3) The Privilege of Attending Segregated Schools of Affluence; (4) The Privilege of Learning About My Race In School; (5) The Privilege of Finding Children's Books That Overwhelmingly Represent My Race; (6) The Privilege of Soaking in Media Blatantly Biased Toward My Race; (7) The Privilege of Escaping Violent Stereotypes Associated With My Race; (8) The Privilege of Playing the Colorblind Card, Wiping The Slate Clean of Centuries of Racism; (9) The Privilege of Being Insulated From the Daily Toll of Racism; and (10) The Privilege of Living Ignorant of the Dire State of Racism Today. *We highly recommend linking to the original and reading his explication of each of these privileges.*

Melinda Wenner Moyer, *The Washington Post*, "[What white parents get wrong about raising antiracist kids — and how to get it right](#)": "When 3-year-olds were shown photos of children of different races and asked to choose whom they might like to be friends with, one-third of the black kids chose only photos of other black kids, but 86 percent of the white kids only chose photos of other white kids."

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Democratic Club of Delray Beach 2021 Membership Application and Renewal



Date _____ New _____ Renewal _____

Name/names of household members _____

Address _____

Community/Condo Name _____

E-mail Address _____ Phone number _____

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