

The Delray Democrat

“I’m Not Calling Mr. DeSantis a Racist, I’m Simply Saying the Racists Believe He’s a Racist”¹

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Ron DeSantis launched his 2018 campaign against Andrew Gillum with a warning to voters not to “monkey this up” by electing Gillum. DeSantis was asked about his dog-whistle appeal to racists at their final debate, as well as his affiliation with figures who’d made racist comments. He became testy, refusing to accept responsibility for everything his supporters might have said and attacking “political correctness” rather than racism.

It was a pretty pathetic defense, and Gillum’s demolished it: “I’m not calling Mr. DeSantis a racist, I’m simply saying the racists believe he’s a racist.”

That’s the issue as we fight to retire DeSantis next year. Dog-whistle racism worked in 2018 and DeSantis is at it again, with his phony crusade against the teaching of “critical race theory.” Many voters are unaware that critical race theory is not even being taught in Florida schools, so that DeSantis is creating an issue where there is none. And few voters understand the meaning or impact, and more importantly, what is not the meaning or impact, by the term “critical race theory” or “systemic racism” and “White Privilege” or “White Advantage.”

Anyone who has been paying attention and is honest must acknowledge that Blacks are profoundly disadvantaged vis-à-vis Whites in America. They possess 10% of the wealth of Whites, are disproportionately arrested and jailed, and are far more likely to be killed in interactions with police. Being informed of these facts does not create racial divisions where none exist, but rather seeks to end the racial divisions that do exist by defining the problem.

Being informed that the “absolute equality” promised to the formerly enslaved at the end of the Civil War has never been granted to them does not mean that a White mother sending her child to a public school in Palm Beach County is being forced to educate her child to be “ashamed of her race.” Being informed that White people are more likely to obtain mortgages or job offers than are Blacks in similar economic circumstances or with similar resumés is not blaming the White person who receives the mortgage or job. It is only asking her to understand what it means to be a Black person in America today.

But now DeSantis has his issue, and it is a powerful one, just as Republicans used peaceful BLM protests to baselessly frighten voters in 2020. It didn’t help Trump but it cost Democrats many seats in Congress and it helped State Representative Mike Caruso, who raised money for his reelection [campaign](#) by claiming that the City Commission was defunding the police (it was not) and that this was sending “a [signal to ANTIFA](#) to come on down.”

¹ *The Delray Democrat*, June 2021, p 5.

Just as they demonized “Defund the Police,” Republicans are demonizing “critical race theory,” “systemic racism,” and “White Advantage.” To beat DeSantis we must explain and detoxify these terms and, above all, stand firm and stand together.