



U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Reform
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

Hearing Topic:
“Confronting White Supremacy (Part VII):
The Evolution of Anti-Democratic Extremist Groups and the Ongoing Threat to
Democracy”

Confronting the New Extremism of the Woke Army and its Threat to Democracy and America’s Children

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Testimony
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Biography

Born in Bombay, India and raised in Morgantown, West Virginia, Asra Q. Nomani is a former *Wall Street Journal* reporter, recognized globally for her advocacy on behalf of women's rights, human rights and children. She is a senior fellow in the practice of journalism at the Independent Women's Network, an organization dedicated to the empowerment of women in civil society.

Ms. Nomani is the author of the forthcoming book, *Woke Army*, published by Post Hill Press, uncovering a disinformation and character assassination campaign against Muslim reformers, ex-Muslim feminists, Jewish leaders and others who challenge an Islamic extremism that promotes sexism, anti-Semitism and the criminalization of members of the LGBTQ+ community. She has previously written two books – *Tantrika: Traveling the Road of Divine Love*, chronicling her journey to empowerment as an American Muslim woman, and *Standing Alone: An American Woman's Struggle for the Soul of Islam*, arguing for moderation within all communities.

A former professor in the practice of journalism at Georgetown University, she is cofounder of the Pearl Project, an initiative in which she led an investigation of her friend and colleague Daniel Pearl's kidnapping and murder by extremists and continues to advocate for justice for Mr. Pearl and against anti-Semitism. She co-authored a book, *The Truth Left Behind: Inside the Kidnapping and Murder of Daniel Pearl*, chronicling in detail the lives of the extremists who ensnared the journalist. She traveled to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to report on the trial of Pearl's alleged killer, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, and wrote a moving essay, [“This is Danny Pearl's Final Story.”](#) in the *Washingtonian* magazine about the ripple impact of violence and trauma.

She is cofounder of Coalition for TJ, a parent advocacy and civil rights group led by Asian American immigrant parents challenging anti-Asian racism. Ms. Nomani publishes groundbreaking columns and investigative work in a newsletter on Substack, “Asra Investigates.”

Ms. Nomani received her BA from West Virginia University, where her father was a professor and her mother a boutique owner on High Street in downtown Morgantown. She has an MA in international communications from American University, where she studied propaganda, cross-cultural communications and the intersection of media, technology and politics.

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Kamala Harris' parents,
Shyamala Gopalan
and Donald Harris



My parents,
Zafar Nomani
and Sajida Nomani

Introduction

Good morning, Chairman Raskin, Ranking Member Mace, and members of the Subcommittee.

Thank you for the honor of being able to testify to you about my reporting as a former *Wall Street Journal* reporter and a senior fellow in the practice of journalism at the Independent Women's Network, an organization dedicated to the empowerment of women in civil society.

I arrived in the United States at the age of four in the summer of 1969 as a Muslim immigrant to America from India. My parents, Zafar and Sajida Nomani, arrived in the United States from India to pursue the American Dream, not much unlike the mother of Vice President Kamala Harris did as a young pioneer herself from India. I grew up in mostly white West Virginia, encouraged, supported and befriended by the community around me.

Over the past 20+ years, I have investigated anti-democratic extremist groups, since the tragic murder of 2,996 innocent people on Sept. 11, 2001. The extremism of these types of groups hit home for me on Jan. 23, 2002, when my colleague and friend from the *Wall Street Journal* left a home I was renting in Karachi, Pakistan, for an interview and never returned. He was the journalist Daniel Pearl.

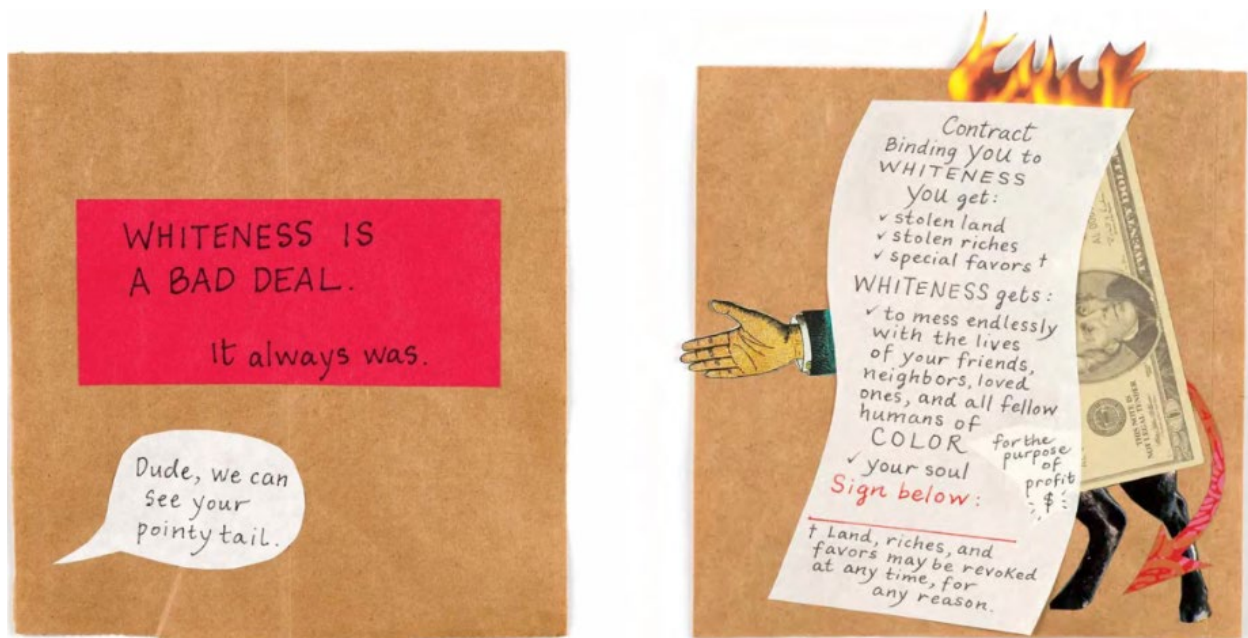
My dining room became the command center for our hunt to find Danny, and I worked beside agents of the FBI to find my friend. We failed. Danny had been slain in the most brutal of ways, beheaded. The Muslim militants who killed him, included the alleged mastermind of the 9/11 attacks – Khalid Sheikh Mohammed – and he and his minions from anti-democratic extremist groups scrubbed the floor of Danny's blood and then spread their prayer rugs to sanction their cruelty in the name of Islam.

In trying to solve the mystery of my friend's whereabouts, I got a crash course in how radicalization works. In the spring of 2002, I brought a souvenir back from Pakistan, as my niece says: a son conceived with my boyfriend in Karachi. Back in my hometown of Morgantown, W.V.. I brought my son into the world as a single mother.

Over my past 20 years raising my son and battling extremism on many fronts, I have seen the disturbing rise a new extremism, fomented by a Woke Army that distorts truths, spreads disinformation and leverages well-funded special interest groups to sabotage not only communities but also K-12 schools, targeting our nation's most vulnerable: our children.

In my 50+ years in the United States, I could never have imagined the racism, bigotry and prejudice that I have heard over the past two-and-half-years, since the summer of 2020 energized a movement in America that I call the Woke Army.

I will share with you the results of my investigative reporting and my takeaways.



1. We must confront extremism in all forms, from Muslim extremists to white supremacists and “anti-racists.”

When I first testified before the U.S. Congress in 2012 before the U.S. Homeland Security Committee on the issue of radicalization within Islam, a curious thing happened: the Democratic representatives turned the debate to the threat of white supremacy and they didn't want to talk about the threats to democracy by extremist groups rooted in Islam. My son was then 10 years old. My mother watched in shock.

When I spoke again in 2017, with my colleague Ayaan Hirsi Ali, before the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs on the topic of “Violent Extremism,” the committee was shell-shocked this time. A gunman whose politics seemed clearly aligned with the American far-left had just waged a targeted assassination on Republican lawmakers playing softball. Unsurprisingly, Democrats were not raising the specter of “white supremacy” in that attack though the perpetrator was white. In fact, they seemed strangely uninterested in discussing it. In other words, their commitment to confronting domestic extremism seems genuine only if the extremists fit their narrative.


We know this well because as Ayaan and I testified about Islamic extremism, the Democratic lawmakers ignored us, then-Sen. Kamala Harris even walked out of the room.

Last year, in 2021, as I went before the House Judiciary Committee to testify on the topic of “Discrimination and the Civil Rights of the Muslim, Arab, and South Asian American Communities,” I brought with me books and lessons taught today in public school districts.

These books teach hate against white students, pitting students against each other in an “Oppression Matrix” and indoctrinating students with a sense of racial and gender grievances and divisions, not connection.

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee demanded I stop filming her scolding of me for pointing this out. I didn’t stop filming and afterwards invited her to meet. I never heard back.

What she didn’t want to discuss was this reality: a new Woke Army is using our educational system, just as Muslim extremists used madrassas, to try to indoctrinate our children with a divisive ideology rooted in the philosophy of critical race theory.



TYPE OF OPPRESSION	PRIVILEGED SOCIAL GROUP	BORDER SOCIAL GROUPS	OPPRESSED SOCIAL GROUPS	SOCIAL IDENTITY CATEGORY
RACISM	White People	Biracial People	Asian, Black, Latina/o, Native People	Race
SEXISM	Male assigned at birth	Intersex People	Female assigned at birth	Sex
TRANSGENDER OPPRESSION	Gender conforming CIS- men and women	Gender ambiguous CIS- men and women	Transgender, Genderqueer, Intersex People	Gender
HETEROSEXISM	Heterosexuals	Bisexuals	Lesbians, Gay men	Sexual Orientation
CLASSISM	Rich, Upper Class People	Middle Class People	Working Class, Poor People	Class
ABLEISM	Able-bodied People	People with Temporary Disabilities	Disabled People	Ability/Disability
RELIGIOUS OPPRESSION	Protestants	Roman Catholic (historically)	Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs	Religion

Missouri attorney general lawsuit, Springfield Public Schools



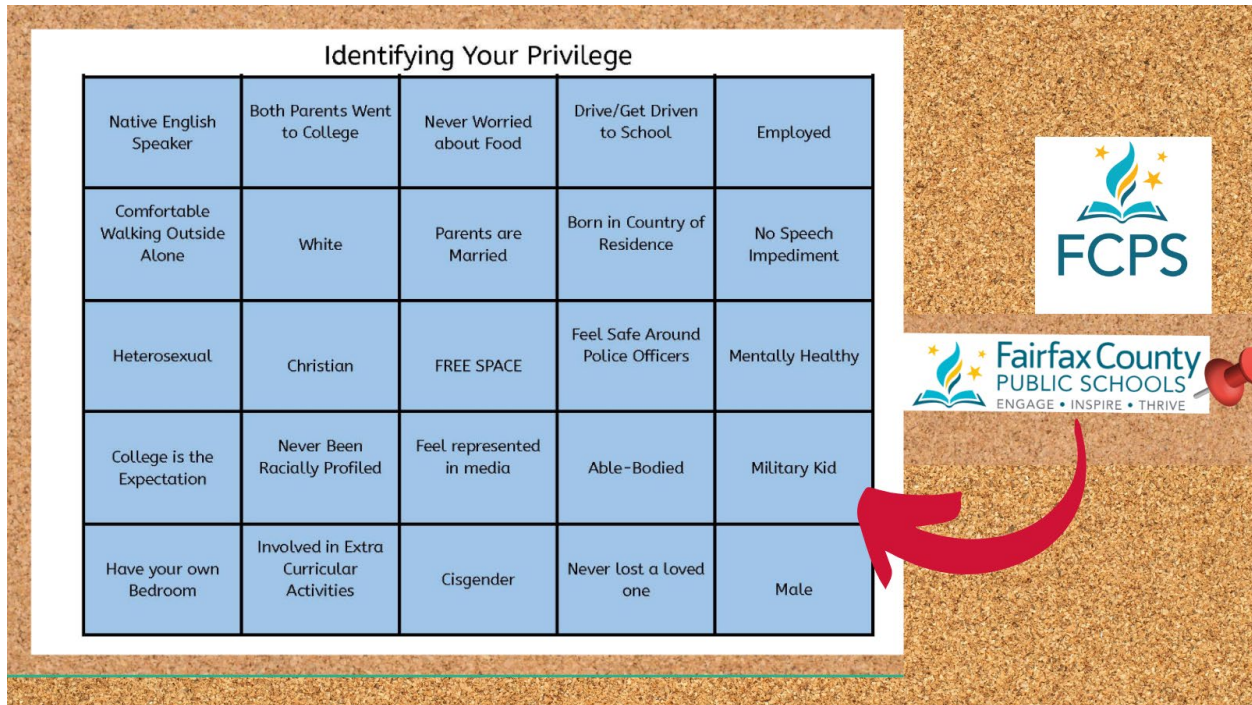
Outside Centennial Elementary School in Denver, Colorado.

2. The new racism, bigotry and segregation of “anti-racism” must end.

On 22nd April 1965, Martin Luther King Jr, [speaking at a meeting](#) of the Massachusetts legislature, lamented the “tragedy” of school segregation. With the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the US had finally dismantled the Jim Crow laws — which King had [joked](#) about burying a decade earlier. The nation had come to King’s conclusion: “Segregation debilitates the segregator as well as the segregated.”

Almost six decades later, from Massachusetts to Colorado, Jim Crow is being resurrected in public schools — this time through euphemisms such as “affinity circles”, “affinity dialogue groups” and “community building groups.” Centennial Elementary School in Denver, for instance, advertised a [“Families of Color Playground Night”](#) earlier this winter, on a marquee board outside the school. Earlier this year, the Wheeler School in Providence, Rhode Island, hosted [a “meet and talk”](#) with actress Karyn Parsons from “The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air” — exclusively for its “Students of Color affinity group.”

“If you are a student of color or multiracial, please join us!” the invitation from a seventh grade teacher read.



Bigotry, meanwhile, is back on the curriculum, thanks partly to a “[Black Lives Matter at School](#)” campaign, which earlier this year recommended the book *Not My Idea: A Book about Whiteness* to children as young as six in Evanston/Skokie School District 65, outside Chicago. “Whiteness is a bad deal”, the book argues; it amounts to signing a “contract” with the devil, who is illustrated with an indelicate pointy tail. Meanwhile, in an English lesson in Fairfax County, Virginia, students played a game of “[Privilege Bingo](#).” Even “Military Kid” has been shamed as having “privilege”.

It’s a tragedy that today’s schools are more segregated than mine was. I arrived in the United States in the summer of 1969, a four-year-old who knew not a word of English. Born in Bombay, I was part of the first generation of post-colonial Indians. My parents had survived the “white supremacy” of British rule, and witnessed Mahatma Gandhi’s march for freedom.

The Civil Rights Act was passed the year before my birth, and I learned the alphabet at Martin Luther King Elementary School in Piscataway, New Jersey. My class photo from 1975 shows 25 diverse, smiling children lined up shoulder-to-shoulder in three rows — organized by height, not skin color.

It makes me shudder to think what I would have felt if I had been told, then, to attend a “Families of Color Playground Night”. I happened to be a shy, “brown” girl raised in a Muslim immigrant family. I didn’t understand our classroom “Secret Santa” ritual or Valentine’s Day card exchanges. But I thrived in integration, not segregation.

I learned to read English with the fictional detective Nancy Drew — a white girl — as my best friend. My teachers never told me to check her privilege. Moving to mostly-white Morgantown, West Virginia, I became pen pals with a white friend named Barbara I'd left behind in Piscataway; at my new school, I was blessed with exemplary teachers who happened to be white, without whose efforts I couldn't have become a reporter for the *Wall Street Journal* at the age of 23.

The beauty of Martin Luther King Jr's America was that everyone's humanity, worth and potential was appreciated, not undermined. Fighting racism used to mean rejecting the notion of a hierarchy of human value. But today the morally twisted teachings of "anti-racism" preach that a *new* hierarchy of human value, with whiteness at the bottom, is acceptable — and even evolved and "progressive." Education activists seem intent on pushing the race-shaming, bigotry and segregation of "anti-racism."

Take the example of Wellesley Public Schools (WPS), 17 miles west of Boston. It is a system with about 4,800 students in seven elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. According to its [most recent demographics](#), it is about 70.6% white, 13.6% Asian, 6.7% multiracial, 5% Hispanic and 4.1% Black.

In September 2019, [Charmie Curry](#), a black former teacher, became Wellesley's director of "diversity, equity and inclusion". In her "entry plan", Curry wrote that she would "hit the ground, learning." On 25 January 2021, Curry emailed the middle school and high school principals about the first "affinity group" meeting on 10 February, for "our Black and Brown students and alumni". She called it a "Listening Space."

Later, the second "affinity" group meeting at Wellesley revealed the dangers of this new segregation. It took place on 18 March 2021, two days after a gunman killed eight people [in three Atlanta spas](#), most of them Asian women. That day, Curry hosted a "Healing Space for Asian and Asian American students (grade 6-12), faculty/staff, and others in the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) community who wish to process recent events". A Wellesley Middle School teacher asked Curry if white students could participate. Her question answered, the teacher wrote to her students:

*"This is a safe space for our Asian/Asian-American and Students of Color, *not* for students who identify only as White. If you identify as White, and need help to process recent events, please know I'm here for you as well as your guidance counselors. If you need to know more about why this is not for White students, please ask me!"*

One mother wrote to the school in protest, arguing that:

“The email immediately pits one group of kids against another, ascribing guilt by mere identity to an entire population of children and adults who are equally scared by the events in Atlanta. I am concerned that in creating spaces for specific groups of students we are perpetuating the feelings of separation, isolation, and difference that we are trying to overcome”.

If such spaces had existed in my school days, they would have carved up my diverse yet tightly-knit class. Barbara and I would have been separated.

But Wellesley is far from unusual. During the 2020 summer of racial reckoning, schools across the country clamored to virtue signal their message of “social justice.” “Affinity groups” have sprung up everywhere.

At [Pierce Middle School](#) in Milton Public Schools, Massachusetts, the “Mosaic Club” meets for “students of color who identify as African American/Black, Latinx/Hispanic American, Native American, Middle Eastern American, Asian/Asian American, or Multiracial”. Across the country, at [Pathfinder Elementary School](#) in Seattle Public Schools, students meet in “Lunchtime Community Building Groups for BIPOC & Multiracial Scholars, K-8.”

And in [Indianapolis Public Schools](#), “affinity groups” have held meetings with this potpourri of names: “Ability Diverse”, “Black/African American”, “LatinX”, “Asian/Pacific Islander”, “Native American/Indigenous”, “Jewish”, “Muslim”, “LGBTQIA+”, “Women’s Network”, “Multi-Racial”, “Multi-Lingual” and “Confronting White Privilege.”

In private schools, too, children are segregated and villainized. [Allen-Stevenson School](#) in New York City hosts meetings of “BOCAS: Boys of Color at Allen-Stevenson” and “WISE: White Identifying Students for Equity.”

Across the country, “diversity” officers and “equity” consultants are spinning a tale that segregation is virtuous. The historically progressive Southern Poverty Law Center, established in 1971 to fight racism, now provides schools with an online “[Toolkit](#)” to create “affinity groups”, through lesson plans it calls “Learning for Justice.” It argues that “affinity groups help marginalized students to be seen and heard”. It even shows schools how to “troubleshoot questions”, like the obvious: “Aren’t affinity groups exclusionary?”

It’s strange to think that in 2022, a declaration that disallows racial segregation is a victory not against “white supremacy” but against the bigotry of “anti-racism.” Like most people, I am appalled by actual racism — but I am also appalled by the efforts of doctrinaire progressives to impose their divisive worldview on children.

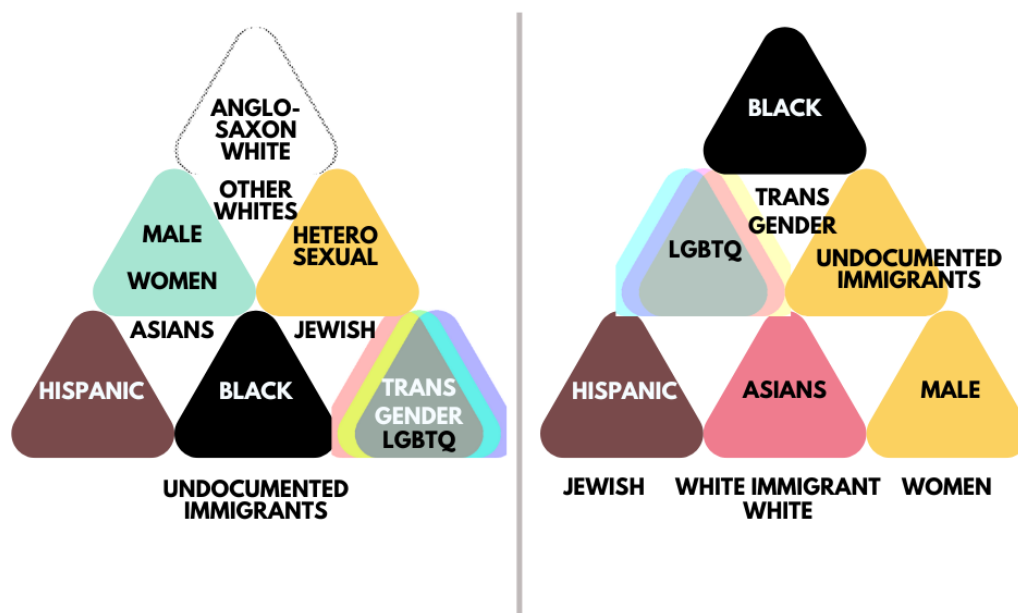
A new Jim Crow is being promoted, often by stealth, by a small cadre of illiberal activists — woke school boards, “diversity” officers and compliant teachers. They often steamroll a community with their bad ideas, which they try to conceal with enthusiasm: “If you need to know more about why this is not for White students, please ask me!”

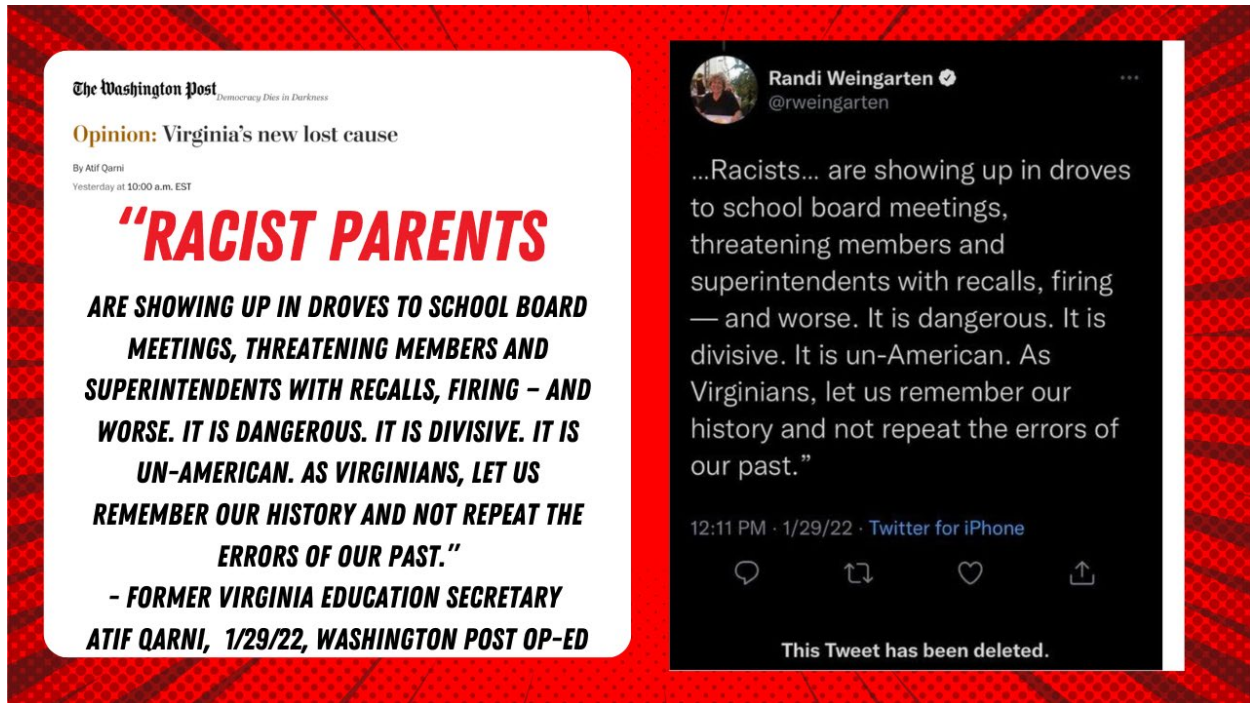
Their doctrine is abundantly clear. Whites — and only whites — are the oppressors and must acknowledge their “privilege,” and admit their shame. Blacks and “people of color”, meanwhile, are portrayed as perpetual victims, people unable to hold their own against white people, hence the need for “affinity spaces”.

Could anything be more racist? This philosophy is blatantly cultish, peddling the idea of original sin, but without the forgiveness. No wonder clear-thinking parents of all races rebel against such transparent nonsense. Teaching children that there is a hierarchy of human value is as illiberal — and regressive — today as it was when King called it a “tragedy.”

Hierarchy of Human Value

How It Started How It's Going





3. Parents are not “racist,” “domestic terrorists,” “white supremacists” or “QAnon moms.” Parental engagement is the best indicator of a child’s success and parents must be supported to nurture our youth into being healthy participants in our democracy.

Today, I am before you to tell you that, after covering violent anti-democratic extremism for 20 years as a classic liberal, I am confounded by the direction of the Biden administration and its allies – many of them assembled here today – in their strange and partisan obsession with “white supremacy.” Of course, where it exists, let us root it out. But as an Asian American immigrant, I know that national security resources have been diverted to use “white supremacy” as a foil to ignore serious violence, including against Asian Americans. We can no longer call out “white supremacy” effectively if even parents of color – like me – are being accused of being “white supremacists.”

My son became a student in Fairfax County, Va., attending America’s No. 1 high school where we—parents and students—organized a successful protest against efforts by a woke school board to abolish the prestigious high school’s merit system for the sole purpose of favoring some racial groups over others. My son, other Asian students and parents, were targeted and slurred as “white adjacent” because we had the temerity to stand up against a proposed racialized and divisive admission system that clearly targeted us.

In 2021, the San Francisco school board replaced merit-based admissions to Lowell High School with a lottery, reducing the number of Asian admissions and inspiring the recent recall of three Democratic school board members with a resounding majority of almost 80% of voters.

One of those school board members, Alison Collins, once disparaged Asians as “house n****r” and “the help.”

According to FBI data, anti-Asian hate crimes rose 73% between 2019 and 2020. New York City saw a 361% increase. It’s said COVID contributed to this spike. But we have something even more diabolical happening.

In the name of “equity,” a national network of illiberal activists and ideologues stoke bias against Asians, an inconvenient minority to be white-washed and shamed. In late 2020, North Thurston Public Schools in Washington state, Asian students were not recognized as “students of color” and lumped in with white students.

This is something you must understand. We are unapologetic in our defense of our children — and all children. We are hard-working enterprising contributors to America who understand education is the great equalizer. Our Coalition for TJ families overcame cultural fears of retaliation to speak out. Nobody gets in between a parent and a child’s education.

We are mama bears and papa bears in today’s parents’ movement.

We oppose the new movement called “equity” that has become a Trojan horse for racism. One of the architects of antiracism, Ibram X Kendi, wrote in his book, *How to Be an Antiracist*, “The only remedy to past discrimination is present discrimination.”

That is unacceptable. That is illegal. That is unconstitutional. We cannot woke-wash racism and bigotry.

The United States Constitution — and common sense — tell us that a just society requires equality of opportunity, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or social status.

“Equity” is a divisive, illiberal system fundamentally at odds with this ideal, because it preaches that there is a quota of opportunities for every group; children are now shamed and judged for their skin color, not their hard work or the content of their character.

Unfortunately, that is exactly what is happening with the new philosophies that have become ingrained in our school systems. You can assign one of many names to this phenomenon. Critical

race theory. Culturally responsive pedagogy. Antiracism. Diversity, equity and inclusion. Magical unicorn theory.

By any name, it is racism.

Yet, for our efforts—our Constitutional right to protest and dissent—we became the objects of something far larger and more sinister.

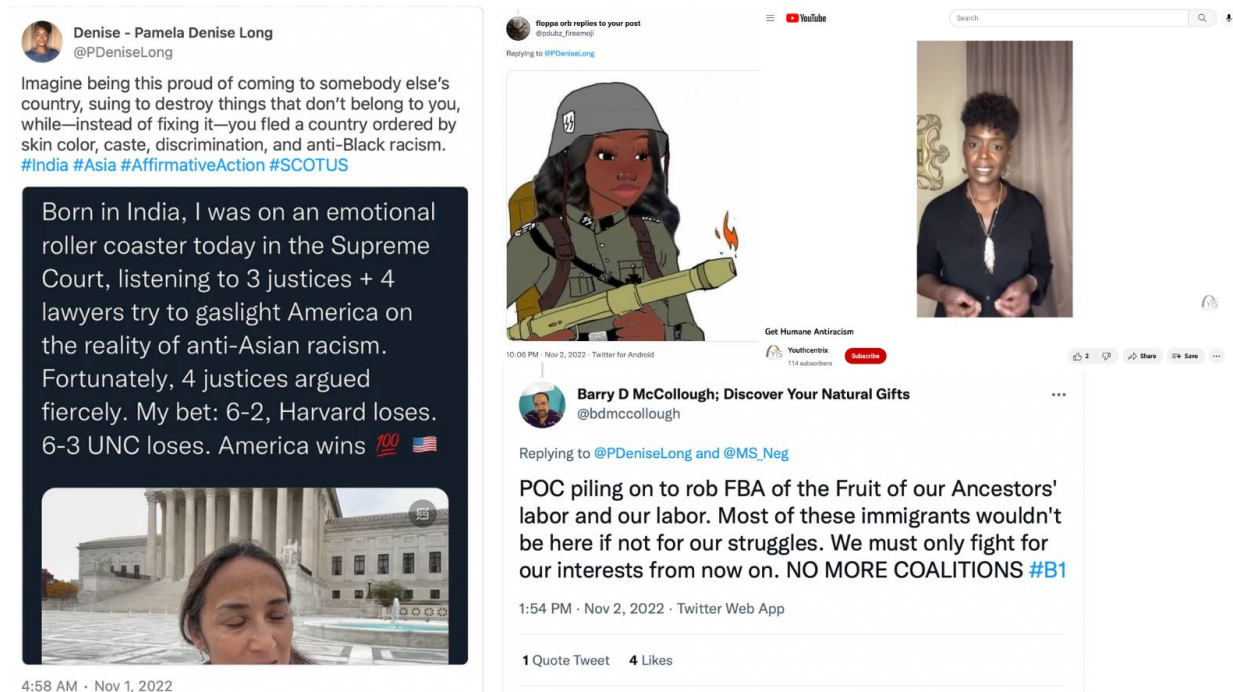
We watched as the Biden administration, in league with school board bureaucrats, attempted to unleash the FBI and DOJ's national security powers to conduct a politicized investigation of *us* as potential domestic terrorists because we loudly made our position known at school board meetings.

It inspired me to hand make this shirt: I am a mom. Not a domestic terrorist. And, today, I wear a shirt that my father, an immigrant to this nation, now 88, made for me with the slurs that I have been called as a parent: "QAnon Mom," "Disinformer," "Domestic Terrorist" and "White Supremacist."

You will hear today about the allegedly "white supremacist" parents in my neighboring Loudoun County, Va., with comparisons made between them and the Proud Boys.

What you will not hear is this truth: a grand jury in Loudoun County, Va., just *yesterday* indicted the school superintendent, Scott Ziegler, and his public information officer,

Where is the bipartisan support for a Congressional investigation of this misuse and abuse of power? We're still waiting.



4. White supremacists don't have a monopoly on the "Great Replacement Theory." Black supremacists also preach it. We must counter bigotry wherever we confront it.

We have heard about the "Great Replacement Theory" of white nationalism. Let me introduce you to some of the smears I have heard in my experience as an Asian American immigrant, hearing the tenets of the "Great Replacement Theory" from members of a group who call themselves "Foundational Black Americans." Because I have dared to speak out against anti-Asian discrimination in admissions to Harvard University, self-described anti-racists have bombarded me with the view that I am "white adjacent", "honorary white", "white passing", and part of the "dominant culture."

These attacks are reminiscent of the words of white extremists. And yet they come from a movement called "Foundational Black Americans" — which espouses the "Great Replacement" theory of white supremacists, accusing immigrants, including black immigrants from the Caribbean and Africa, of stealing resources. In one radio show, founder Tariq Nasheed accuses black immigrants of being "tethers" to America with "anchor babies," "smelling like booty juice and flies", "smelling like cheetah pee" and taking jobs and resources owed to black people born in the US.

Nasheed says Foundational Black Americans is not a hate group, but rather a "lineage." My suspicion that the ire directed at me was a comment on my immigrant status has been confirmed. I got a message recently: "Go back to India." I've been accused of coming from an

“upper caste family” (though I am Muslim, not Hindu); of being a “white Aryan Indian”, allegedly descending from the Aryan tribe that captured [Hitler’s imagination](#); and of having “musty underarms.” “You Asians are the pets of white supremacy, flat face,” wrote [one Twitter user](#) from the group, Foundational Black Americans.

5. Education is a civil rights issue. Denying children appropriate education – many in protected classes – is a hate crime. We must refocus on the basics of education – writing, reading, math, science and history, instead of culture war issues of anti-racism and gender ideology.

So, yes, of course, reasonable people of all political stripes want our nation to be vigilant against all strains of domestic terrorism regardless of the political affiliations.

But let us not lose sight of the real prize and the real issue. A movement of mama bears and papa bears nationwide are dedicated to something else: the achievement of merit, the equality of all students and the fundamental need to teach children well, so that they do not become victims to learning loss and succumb to the siren call of extremists who would indoctrinate them to nefarious purposes..

The World Bank estimates this generation of youth today will lose \$14 trillion in lifetime earning potential because of the impact of shutting down our school systems during the Covid pandemic.

The U.S. Congress – including the lawmakers on the committee – have pumped billions of dollars of federal funds – from legislation with acronyms like “IDEA” and “ESSER” – into school districts – including your own. Yet, many parents watch in despair as too many of our school boards lavish that money on turf football fields and expensive consultants, many of whom are peddling a thoroughly modern kind of racism in the form of critical race theory and extreme identity politics.

Many schools can’t seem to teach our kids to read or write at grade level or prepare them for a college STEM career. But they do seem to have lots of money to throw at intrusive surveys that try to divine the gender proclivities of some small sliver of students. We need to reallocate existing funds and return resources to parents, who hold their children’s best interest at heart and who are best equipped and placed to understand their educational needs.

As another immigrant parent, Kandice Lucas, an advocate for special-needs students, says, “Education is a civil rights issue. If you don’t adequately educate a child – a child of color, a

child with disabilities, any child – you are denying them their equal opportunity and protection. You are denying them their civil rights. Many of these children are in a protected class. Withholding education from them is a hate crime.”

We must stop being myopic in our focus on “white supremacy” as the great threat facing America. In the true spirit of intersectionality, we must recognize that extremism comes in many forms. We must recognize that wider extremism is fomenting hate and it emerges from the left as well. We must stop framing parents as a domestic threat and credit them with being the frontline against the forms of indoctrination that, in fact, are the fertile ground for domestic terrorism.

Lower levels of education are a risk factor for radicalization into extremist groups, according to a [Department of Justice report](#), “Risk Factors and Indicators Associated With Radicalization to Terrorism in the United States: What Research Sponsored by the National Institute of Justice Tells Us.” Risk factors include factors such as being unemployed, having mental health issues, having criminal history, having trouble in relationships. All of these things are on the rise in the U.S. If lawmakers want to combat extremism – including white supremacy – you must focus on combatting the youth brain health crisis, which many call a “mental health” epidemic, exacerbated by school closures, working to ensure economic opportunities so that people are attached to meaning in their work – and don't seek meaning in an extremist group – and fostering a healthy culture of family and community life, so that people don't self-isolate as “loners” and turn against humankind.

The policy prescriptions for reducing extremism are to focus on building a healthy culture, economy and education system – all things that the far-left seem intent on destroying.

And we must recognize that the greatest domestic threat we face in America today is the learning loss from which children have not yet recovered. It is our sacred duty to confront – and investigate – system failures in our public school system from Loudoun County, Virginia, to Dearborn, Michigan, and allow education dollars to follow the child, so we can raise a next generation that is educated, enlightened citizens contributing to our great democracy.

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