

RESOLUTION CENSURING THE FOUR PALM BEACH COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS WHO VOTED TO WEAKEN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT’S EQUITY STATEMENT; AND URGING THOSE SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS TO RECONSIDER THEIR DECISION TO DO SO

WHEREAS, we, the members of the Palm Beach County Democratic Executive Committee, are committed to –

- (1) Supporting Black, Latinx, Asian, and other communities of color;
- (2) Combating systemic racism; and
- (3) Furthering the cause of racial equity in Palm Beach County; and

WHEREAS, we are committed to these ends not only as individuals but also as a body; and

WHEREAS, we recognize these commitments as core to our values as Democrats; and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge that to effectively support communities of color and combat systemic racism, we must –

- (1) Listen to people of color;
- (2) Center their perspectives in conversations about racial equity; and
- (3) Reflect critically on how we might further the cause of racial equity in the various social, civic, and religious institutions to which we belong; and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge that white advantage is a feature of systemic racism; and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge that we cannot effectively combat systemic racism if we cannot talk plainly about its features; and

WHEREAS, the Palm Beach County School Board unanimously approved a racial equity statement that acknowledged the Board’s obligation to combat systemic racism and dismantle “structures rooted in white advantage”; and

WHEREAS, after the Palm Beach School Board approved the racial equity statement, its members heard complaints from residents who felt that it was inappropriate to seek to dismantle “structures rooted in white advantage”; and

WHEREAS, after receiving such complaints, some School Board members felt it necessary to remove language about “dismantling structures rooted in white advantage” from the equity statement, calling the language “divisive” and arguing that the District could combat systemic racism even if its governing body could not speak plainly about it; and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge that racists will oppose fighting racism, that fighting racism will be divisive wherever there are racists, and that “divisiveness” is not in itself a legitimate criticism of anti-racist measures; and

WHEREAS, a multiracial, intergenerational, and intersectional coalition of constituents appeared before the School Board and voiced their support for District’s equity statement as written; and

WHEREAS, the School Board disregarded the wishes and concerns of the above-mentioned coalition and decided, by a 4-3 vote, to weaken the racial equity statement by removing the language about “dismantling the structures rooted in white advantage”; and

WHEREAS, the four elected School Board members who voted to weaken the racial equity statement are registered Democrats; and

WHEREAS, we – as individuals and as a body – expect all elected officials who are registered Democrats to have the courage required to actively combat systemic racism, even when doing so may be politically disadvantageous; and

WHEREAS, the decision to weaken the School District’s racial equity statement runs counter to our Democratic values; and

WHEREAS, these four board members, all of whom are registered Democrats, have lost the trust and confidence of many activists and leaders of color whose enthusiastic support for the Democratic Party has been - and will continue to be - critical to party’s success in Palm Beach County and in Florida more broadly; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT –

The Palm Beach County Democratic Executive Committee hereby:

- (1) Censures the four School Board members who voted to weaken the School District’s equity statement against the wishes of a multi-racial, intergenerational, and intersectional coalition of constituents who voiced their support for the equity statement as written; and
- (2) Urges those members to make a motion to reconsider the Board’s decision to weaken the District’s equity statement and to reinsert language expressing the District’s commitment to dismantling the structures rooted in white advantage.