



Joint Letter Opposing ADL’s New Definition of “Racism”

RE: Rejecting Biased and Politically Motivated Re-definition of “Racism”

Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO and National Director
 Anti-Defamation League
 605 Third Avenue
 New York, NY 10158-3650
 February 2, 2022

Dear Mr. Greenblatt,

We are 22 organizations alarmed by your group’s redefinition of “racism” to bring it into compliance with the latest woke political trends. Gone is the impartial definition of racism that sets a neutral standard by which we can judge conduct and beliefs. This is

replaced with “(t)he marginalization and/or oppression of people of color based on a socially constructed racial hierarchy that privileges white people.” This inflammatory mischaracterization of an historically and contemporarily consequential concept sets a corrosive example for ADL supporters and the rest of the society. It is using language as a cudgel to beat up on one group rather than as means to promote truth and clear communication.

Changing the definition of “racism” from one that applied neutrally to a narrow and politicized new focus that seeks to stigmatize white people while falsely presenting all “people of color” as oppressed victims is an insult to our collective history and to reality itself. This redefinition categorically disregards the history of race- and ethnic-based inter-group conflicts and other examples of racism. It is a fatally limited and shortsighted account of numerous ethno-racial conflicts in different parts of the world throughout the long history of human civilizations.

The sad reality is that racism, along with judging, rewarding or punishing by identity grouping, has been a universal aspect of the human condition throughout history. There is no one group that owns the status of victim and no one group that owns the status of victimizer – and it is deeply offensive, illiberal, and un-American to ascribe guilt and innocence to individuals on the basis of their race. In fact, there is a word for doing that: Racism.

The ADL’s new concept of “racism,” borrowed entirely from Marxist critical theory, undermines your group’s long-standing mission “to stop the defamation of the Jewish people, and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.” How can the ADL advocate for fair treatment of Jews when the ADL now declares that whites – including those of Jewish descent – are privileged oppressors? It is sad that the ADL, an organization founded on the principle of equal treatment, is now embracing the principle of unequal treatment and collective race-based guilt and innocence.

We cannot save the ADL from making an enormous mistake that will remove your group from the ranks of organizations that advocate neutral, liberal policies, and place it instead firmly on the far-left fringes of the political spectrum, its reputation and credibility forever damaged. There is an elegant solution to the problem: The ADL can embrace a definition of racism that is accurate and non-political. We think ADL’s previous definition is especially good: “Racism is the belief that a particular race is superior or inferior to another, that a person’s social and moral traits are predetermined by his or her inborn biological characteristics.”

Sincerely,

Californians For Equal Rights Foundation
Alliance to Protect Children
America Strong
A Time to Stand

California Policy Center
Center of the American Experiment
Chinese American Citizens Alliance Greater New York
Coalition for TJ
Fair Education Santa Barbara
Free Black Thought
For Kids & Country
I Choose Love Campaign
National Association of Scholars
National Society for the Advancement of Black Americans
No Left Turn in Education
Parents Defending Education
Protect Our Kids
San Diego Asian Americans for Equality
Silicon Valley Chinese Association Foundation
Stop Critical Race Theory
TOC Foundation