



## **BCRI Responds to Mountain Brook's Criticism of Diversity Education**

From the office of the President & CEO  
July 30, 2021

The mission of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute is to enlighten each generation about civil and human rights by exploring our common past and working together in the present to build a better future. This mission extends to our work championing such rights by facilitating an atmosphere of dialogue and understanding. It is within this understanding that BCRI finds critical fault with current efforts to ban, distort, or subvert open and honest conversations about racism and its manifestations including structural, systemic, and colorblind racism. We at BCRI concur with a long list of educational institutions, legal experts, scholars, and researchers that the only way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to speak openly and candidly on the subject of race and racism. This includes analyzing and understanding how racism has manifested itself in the past (e.g., Jim Crow Racism here in Birmingham) and how the effects of centuries of racial discrimination continue to infect today's politics, our society, and its institutions.

As a cultural and educational research center that promotes a comprehensive understanding for the significance of civil rights developments in Birmingham, we must first recognize that what is occurring in Mountain Brook is not new, there is a history of resident opposition to diversity and inclusion. Something that we invite everyone to explore in their own way. We are particularly troubled that these efforts persist only a few miles from the historical monuments like the site of the 16th street Baptist Church bombing, the Freedom Rider attacks, and the children's march.

We hope that sober and responsible community and school leadership find a way to have the difficult conversations that are ahead of them. We also want them to know that we have and will continue to support their efforts to make Mountain Brook and Jefferson County a place that is welcoming and respectful to all. Everyone is charged with the duty of combating bias and bullying. It takes the entire community to end the escalation of hatred present in our schools. It is up to all of us to fight race discrimination, combat extremism, hate and inequity to secure justice in our schools.

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**Media Contact:**

Gina Mallisham, Marketing Manager  
205.328.9696 x211  
[gmallisham@bcri.org](mailto:gmallisham@bcri.org)

**About BCRI:** The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute is a cultural and educational research center that promotes a comprehensive understanding for the significance of The Civil Rights Movement in Birmingham. For more than 28 years, we have enlightened each generation about civil and human rights. A part of the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument and an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, we stand strong as the cornerstone of the civil rights story, a living memorial with an ongoing mission.