



Written by [John Stossel](#) on June 15, 2023

Fighting Woke

People hate Chris Rufo.

“Your agenda to turn our campus into a space of extremist indoctrination is harming our enrollment!” shouts a student at Florida’s New College. “You are the problem!”

“I’m not the problem,” Rufo tells me in my newest video. “I’m actually the solution.”

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis made Rufo a trustee of a state college. Rufo quickly moved to end what he considers leftist indoctrination.



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“We fired the director of DEI and abolished her entire department.”

Rufo learned about indoctrination after making a PBS documentary on poverty. He started getting odd leaks from government workers.

“Mid-level bureaucrats, so exasperated with what was happening, started feeding me documents,” says Rufo.

The documents showed that government Diversity, Equity and Inclusion officials pushed anti-white racism. Seattle told employees, “Work on undoing your own whiteness.”

It’s a product of critical race theory, says Rufo. “The intention is to have an emotional lever against you.”

“What’s in it for them? I ask.

“Career advancement, and cultural and emotional power over others,” he answers.

Tweeting the leaks led to more leaks. “I did one story, and then I’d get five or six people sending me documents ... then suddenly it was 100 people and 1,000 people.”

A worker at the defense contractor Sandia Labs revealed that Sandia’s new hiring rules require them to always interview “at least one” woman and one minority.

“Sounds fair,” I say to Rufo. “Make up for past discrimination.”

“You should be encouraging a wide variety of people to apply,” Rufo responds. “But when we’re talking about nuclear weapons, you need to have the most capable individuals, regardless of race or sex.”

Rufo’s critics accuse him of making things up. The New Yorker profile on him was titled “How a Conservative Activist Invented the Conflict Over Critical Race Theory.”

“I post all of the original source documents for every one of my stories,” Rufo responds. “It’s so shameful when it’s exposed to sunlight that they’ve engaged in these accusations as a form of denial.”

“All 100 Fortune 100 companies have DEI bureaucracies. It’s seen as second nature to endorse Black Lives Matter, a left-wing racial activist organization responsible for rioting, violence, but if you say, ‘I’m



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pro-life and I want a pro-life message in a corporate setting, it would be shut down immediately! ... Why are only one set of political ideologies allowed?"

I push back, "Because America's history of slavery and oppression is so bad."

"But that's also based on a lie!" Rufo replies. "Of course, slavery is an abominable historical legacy, but the record of the United States on slavery ... is much better than almost anywhere else."

Florida now has banned all public universities from funding DEI programs, and from claiming that systemic racism is inherent in the United States.

But doesn't that violate professors' right to speak? The free speech group FIRE calls Florida's new university rules "flatly unconstitutional."

"I worry about things you and DeSantis do," I tell Rufo. "It feels authoritarian."

"Impressionable young kids should not be taught race hatred," Rufo responds. "These are commonsense restrictions that aren't authoritarian. They're simply acknowledging that the state is the authority in the public schools."

Florida forbids public schoolteachers from teaching the '1619 Project,' which argues that America was really founded when slaves were brought here.

"The idea that the founders fought the revolution to protect slavery," says Rufo, "is so mind-boggling that even Marxist historians debunked it."

That's true. But doesn't he worry that the next Florida governor might *require* schools to teach things like the '1619 Project'?

"Of course I worry about that," says Rufo. "But that's what democracy is for ... what politics is for."

Really? I think politics is for letting us choose representatives who preside over *limited* government, one that protects us from fraud, force and theft, but mostly leaves us alone.

Florida leads the nation in school choice. That's great. We're better off when politicians give power back to parents. Then parents who want their kids taught the '1619 Project' can have that. Those who don't are free to pick another school.

Choice is better than diktats from politicians.

Every Tuesday at JohnStossel.com, Stossel posts a new video about the battle between government and freedom.

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