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Last Tuesday's CC vote on racism as a public health crisis



By **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

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An online dictionary defines “white fragility” as “discomfort and defensiveness on the part of a white person when confronted by information about racial inequality and injustice.”

We saw that much on display [Tuesday night in the City Council meeting](#).

People of color, through the Lowell Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Consortium, told us that they needed to hear our city join the ranks of the “woke” cities in this country by declaring that racism is the public health crisis that it is.

In a typical scenario described by author Robin DiAngelo (“White Fragility”), an unpalatable truth about systemic racism is brought forth and the uncomfortable white person in the room makes the conversation all about how they are being made to feel badly when they’re not a racist at all. Meanwhile the truth is never addressed.

I’m sickened and saddened that, in spite of testimony from and about Lowell students of color on their lived experiences with racism in our city, at rallies, in the Lowell Listens session, and at the meeting Tuesday, compassion for the children being hurt by racism could not prevail over the white fragility. Worse. People of color trusted our city enough to speak up. And then five councilors chose to ignore their pain and their expressed need.

Thank you Mayor Leahy and Councilors Drinkwater, Nuon, and Chau for trying to do the right thing. Shame on the rest of the councilors for the hurtful message sent to the people of color in this city.

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