

**HISTORY OF
OTTAWA'S DE&I
DEPARTMENT**

Ottawa County, Michigan

Excerpt from Pro-Life Protection Assessment

May 11, 2022

Ottawa County is one of the fastest growing counties in Michigan, and per Wikipedia, “has long been one of the most consistently Republican counties in Michigan and the country,” voting Republican in every Presidential election for the past 150 years.

Ottawa County has been strategically targeted by the progressive left on racial and cultural issues for the last decade, with little defense from its Republican County Commissioners.

This slow infiltration bubbled to the surface in 2018 with powerful, private corporations in Ottawa County pushing the government to create a Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DE&I) office.

Ottawa County joined efforts with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) as early as 2014, with the County Administrator, overseen by the County Commissioners, being a key player in these efforts.

In 2015, Ottawa County was one of two pilot locations in the U.S. to participate in the Transforming White Privilege Project, with staff from the county Administrator's Office, Sheriff's Office and Human Resources Office participating.

Ottawa County was an early core member of **GARE**, which was created by the progressive parent organizations of **Race Forward** and the **Othering & Belonging Institute of UC Berkeley**, the latter of which was formerly named the Haas Institute for Fair and Inclusive Society.

GARE's parent organizations are directly aligned with the Democratic Party, Planned Parenthood, and sexuality activism, promoting progressive issues including abortion and "reproductive justice" through their social media feeds on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, as well as through Race Forward's online news site, Colorlines.

On April 15, 2022, **Race Forward promoted an eye-opening video on reproductive justice and abortion** from their #RaceAnd: series (originally posted in February of 2022), asking, "How do race and gender intersect with reproductive justice? How can we make abortion activism more inclusive?" Similarly, the Othering & Belonging Institute published a video titled, Inside the Fight for Reproductive Justice on May 3, 2022. **A sampling of additional postings and articles which include abortion and reproductive justice content from Race Forward, Colorlines, and The Othering & Belonging Institute can be found HERE.**

Race Forward received \$1,595,000 in funding from George Soros' Open Society Foundation from 2017 to 2020. The Othering & Belonging Institute/Haas Institute for Fair and Inclusive Society received \$1,125,000 from the Open Society Foundation during the same time period. Also of note, in 2020, Race Forward hired Cathy Albisa as the Vice President of Institutional and Sectoral Change. Ms. Albisa was a constitutional rights litigator at the ACLU and the Center for Reproductive Rights and served as board leadership for National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health.

Ottawa County Commissioners: Oversight of the Infiltration of the Progressive Agenda in Ottawa County



Board Chair Greg DeJong, Philip Kuyers, Roger Bergman, Joseph Baumann, Allen Dannenberg, and Frank Garcia voted to approve the DE&I office in 2018.

GARE's parent orgs promote race equity, abortion rights, and sexuality activism, and recommended opening the DEI office to Ottawa County.



Othering & Belonging Institute
Formerly CSI.
Parent org of GARE out of UC Berkeley.

Member of GARE since 2014/2015, along with progressive cities such as Portland and Seattle.



LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT ALLIANCE ON RACE & EQUITY

GARE, the Government Alliance on Race & Equity.



Parent org of GARE. Currently houses GARE. Building on GARE framework to advance Race Equity in Biden's federal government agencies.

COLORLINES

Promotes race equity, abortion rights, and sexuality activism



A new initiative to counter parents advocating for education free of CRT and sexuality activism.

← **Race Forward**
29.6K Tweets Following

↳ Race Forward Retweeted

 **Gothamist** ✓ @Gothamist · May 3 ⋮

New Yorkers are gearing up to march in the streets on Tuesday in the wake of a draft Supreme Court decision that could overturn Roe v. Wade, upending nearly a half century of legal precedent and eroding people's right to abortion access.



gothamist.com
NYC protests planned in wake of bombshell Roe v. Wade report
New York political and community leaders were already mobilizing late Monday and early Tuesday.

Race Forward: Twitter Retweet on May 3, 2022

← **Othering & Belonging Institute** 13.2K Tweets Follow

↻ Othering & Belonging Institute Retweeted

 **Imara Jones**  @imarajones · May 3 ...

Abortion rights and trans rights are one in the same. As @KierraDC and I argue in this piece, the right sees this as one fight in an assault on body autonomy. People need to wake up. #RoevWade @TheTaskForce @translashmedia



lgbtqnation.com
Transgender people get pregnant. And sometimes trans people need...
Trans people deserve access to culturally competent medical care ...

Othering & Belonging Institute: Twitter Retweet on May 3, 2022

HISTORY OF OTTAWA'S DE&I DEPARTMENT



Othering & Belonging Institute: Instagram post on Dec 3, 2021



Othering & Belonging Institute: Instagram post on January 28, 2022

HISTORY OF OTTAWA'S DE&I DEPARTMENT



Othering & Belonging Institute: Instagram post on Dec 7, 2021



Othering & Belonging Institute: Instagram post on January 28, 2022

HISTORY OF OTTAWA'S DE&I DEPARTMENT

Low-Income Women Will Suffer Most Because of Abortion Ban
 The state of Mississippi has formally asked The Supreme Court to reverse Roe v. Wade.
 SHANI SAXON | JUL 30, 2021 4:29PM EDT

Abortion Rights Activists File Federal Lawsuit Against Texas Abortion Ban
 The state law, set to take effect on September 1, bans abortions as early as six weeks, and allows private citizens to sue anyone who helps a person get an abortion.
 SHANI SAXON | JUL 15, 2021 10:17AM EDT

Colorlines Q&A: Meet Yamani Hernandez, a Black Person at the Helm of a 'Revolutionary' Abortion Org
 "So there's hope on one side and despair on the other. I think the next year or two will be very telling," says the executive director of The National Network of Abortion Funds.
 AYANA BYRD | FEB 19, 2021 2:08PM EST

Color Lines: February and July 2021

California Poised to Be First State to Provide Free Medication Abortions to College Students
 The law will benefit the students at public universities in the state, who are predominantly people of color and may face geographic and economic hurdles to obtaining the medical procedure.
 AYANA BYRD | SEP 16, 2019 3:18PM EDT

Court Temporarily Blocks Missouri's Eight-Week Abortion Ban
 But new restrictions—including for cases of fetal Down Syndrome—were allowed to go into effect.
 AYANA BYRD | AUG 28, 2019 1:37PM EDT

Planned Parenthood Withdraws From Title X Program
 "We believe that the Trump administration is doing this as an attack on reproductive health care and to keep providers like Planned Parenthood from serving our patients."
 AYANA BYRD | AUG 19, 2019 4:21PM EDT

Planned Parenthood's New Leader On Racial Equity and Reproductive Health Freedom
 Alexis McGill Johnson talks to Colorlines about bringing her life's work as a racial justice organizer to the reproductive health care organization.
 AYANA BYRD | AUG 9, 2019 1:28PM EDT

Planned Parenthood President Exits as Organization Prepares for Political Fight
 Dr. Leana Wen, who is leaving after eight months, maintains that abortion is a health care—not political—issue.
 AYANA BYRD | JUL 17, 2019 2:16PM EDT

New Blueprint For Reproductive Justice Hopes to Transform Health Care
 More than 80 organizations wrote a manifesto to bring about new policies even as growing conservatism seeks to limit access to reproductive care.
 AYANA BYRD | JUL 16, 2019 2:45PM EDT

Color Lines: July, August and September 2019

GARE MEMBERSHIP

Ottawa County, Michigan

Ottawa County is a Midwest Core Member of GARE.

GARE core memberships for city or county jurisdictions require a demonstrated commitment to advancing racial equity across all functions and employees, from frontline staff to elected officials.

Frequent participation by the jurisdiction with the organization network is required. Counties must pay annual dues based on number of employees, with **Ottawa's expense for membership projected to be \$5,000/year for 1,001 – 4,000 employees.**

Additional GARE members include the progressive cities of Portland, Seattle, and Minneapolis. Governor Whitmer's MDHHS and the Michigan Department of Civil Rights (MDCR), aligned with Attorney General Dana Nessel, are also members of GARE. In early 2019, AG Nessel and MDCR created "a process to document incidents of hate and bias that don't rise to the level of criminal or civil infractions," creating a database of such incidents in Michigan. Both GARE and the Michigan Department of Civil Rights have provided direct training to Ottawa County through Ottawa's DE&I office.

ESTABLISHMENT OF
OTTAWA'S DE&I
DEPARTMENT

Ottawa County, Michigan

ESTABLISHMENT OF OTTAWA'S DE&I DEPARTMENT

In December of 2018, under the leadership of Board Chair Greg DeJong, the Commissioners voted to establish the DE&I Department at the request of large local corporations.

The department was budgeted to cost \$1.1 million over 5 years, with the county committing to \$631K, and community foundations and corporations covering the remaining portion, which was primarily paid by the outside sources in the early years. (The department added a staff member in 2022 and has requested additional expenditures, raising the projected cost to county outlined below by approximately 100k.)

2019 \$12,575
2020 \$77,995
2021 \$109,975
2022 \$196,955 (actual expense now approximately \$270,000)
2023 \$234,460
2024 \$266,757 (year 6)

The commissioners who voted to approve the office were; Board Chair Greg DeJong, Philip Kuyers, Roger Bergman, Joseph Baumann, Allen Dannenberg, and Frank Garcia. Commissioners Michael Haverdink, James Holtvluwer and Matthew Fenske voted against. Kelly Kuiper was absent.

In February of 2019, the request to fund and staff the DE&I office for the first year was approved by Board Chair Greg DeJong, and Commissioners Philip Kuyers, James Holtvluwer, Frank Garcia, Allen Dannenberg, Roger Bergman, Douglas Zylstra, Kyle Terpstra, and Joseph Baumann. Commissioners Meppelink and Fenske were absent. The request included hiring a Director of DE&I at a cost of \$124,961.00 and a Senior Secretary at a cost of \$64,478.00, with a 2% increase each year for cost-of-living adjustment, 5% health insurance increase and salary step increases.

In the board packet for this vote was a letter dated January 30, 2019, from **Julie Nelson, Senior Vice President of Race Forward; Senior Fellow, Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society at the University of CA, Berkeley (now the Othering and Belonging Institute); and Co-Director of GARE.** **Julie Nelson** asked the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners to support County Administrator Al Vanderberg's proposal to establish the DE&I office in Ottawa County (proposal pg. 49-60, GARE letter pg. 57-59). Race Forward, Center for Social Inclusion, and GARE logos were included on the top of Ms. Nelson's recommendation letter.

Ms. Nelson wrote, "Ottawa County has been a Core Member of the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) for the past three years. **County Administrator Al Vanderberg actually attended our very first gathering that led to the establishment of GARE as a peer-to-peer, membership-led, membership-driven network in 2014.**"

ESTABLISHMENT OF OTTAWA'S DE&I DEPARTMENT

In spite of the ability to research and be familiar with GARE and its parent organizations' promotion of the progressive agenda through **the county's membership with GARE**, as well by researching the **organizations represented on Ms. Nelson's letter**, the majority Republican Ottawa County Board of Commissioners voted to fund the DE&I Department. Ongoing funding of the DE&I Department/GARE membership occurs through the yearly county budget.

The Ottawa County DE&I Department's first county Diversity Training in 2019 included training by GARE members, and a keynote by Dr. Mira Krishnan, "named one of the Trans100, a recognition of influential transgender Americans", who presented From Ensuring Safety to Building the Community's Future: The Challenge and Opportunities of Building an Ottawa County that Includes and Celebrates Gender and Sexually Diverse Residents. In October, 2020, GARE's Director and Midwest Manager taught Ottawa County's DE&I Department's Diversity Training, titled Advancing Racial Equity, The Role of Government.

In a GovLove Podcast on February 25, 2022, Interim County Administrator, John Shay, noted the corporations involved in the DE&I Department formation were concerned the county's demographics of being over 90% white and largely Conservative would make it difficult to retain the "best and the brightest from other areas of the country and the world," as they may feel less welcome.

In March of 2022, after identifying a desire to hire a new county administrator who was a "champion and advocate for initiatives, programs and strategies that improve racial equity," the Ottawa County Commissioners unanimously voted to hire Shay as the new County Administrator.

ADVANCEMENT OF
OTTAWA'S GARE
MEMBERSHIP

To Local Municipalities

According to GARE's website, GARE is creating a national network of government working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all.

In addition to training its own County employees and the community, **Ottawa County has promoted GARE membership and DEI training to local jurisdictions through GARE Learning Communities of Practice**. Spring Lake Township, the Village of Spring Lake, Grand Haven, the City of Muskegon, Zeeland, Holland, Hudsonville, Allendale, and Coopersville have been reported to be participating. Multiple action steps of engagement with GARE are outlined for communities to move through as part of the GARE Learning Communities of Practice, culminating in their own initiative with GARE.

In May 2021, Robyn Afrik sent the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to all local municipalities (cities, townships, and villages) within Ottawa County requesting their participation working with the County DEI office and other municipalities in what is called the **Learning Communities of Practice (LCoP)**. **This MOU was a non-binding agreement for a municipality to complete six months of DEI pre-work before having to pay a fee to the county (estimated at \$2,000 per participant, not per municipality).**

A proposal obtained via Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) includes Ottawa's Request for Proposal (Exhibit A) and the response from the chosen vendor, Multi-Training Systems, LLC (MTS), to provide facilitator services for 12 months using GARE tools and resources. MTS proposed a **total cost of \$52,500** to provide the requested services. MTS facilitator would be assigned to each municipality that agreed to commit past the pre-work and utilize the GARE framework.

A spreadsheet also obtained via FOIA shows the municipalities that agreed to continue the DEI work, the number of participants involved, and cost paid to county (based on size, potential discounting and non-profit funding):

Grand Haven (2 participants, \$900)
Muskegon (3 participants, \$4,100)
Spring Lake Township (2 participants, \$700)
Spring Lake Village (1 participant, \$250)
Holland (5 participants, \$8,375)
Holland Board of Public Works (3 participants, \$5,025)
Zeeland (1 participant, \$1,575)
Zeeland Board of Public Works (1 participant, \$1,575)

Payments from municipalities totaled \$22,500.

ADVANCEMENT OF OTTAWA'S GARE MEMBERSHIP

The county also received an additional \$10,000 grant from Community Foundation of Holland Zeeland and \$20,000 in a *potential* grant was pending from Grand Haven Community Foundation.

This provided the county the \$52,500 to proceed in contracting with MTS.

Hudsonville, Allendale, Ferrysburg and Coopersville had not signed any MOU for DEI work per Doug Van Essen, Ottawa County Corporation Counsel. At the time of this writing, a BOC vote to approve the RFP and/or contract with MTS was not confirmed.

In addition to promoting GARE membership and teachings to our townships and cities, Robyn Afrik is promoting GARE to counties across the state through the MAC Conference, of which Commissioner Phil Kuyers serves as President. Kuyers also serves on the Board of Directors of the National Association of Counties (NaCo), and Ottawa County's DE&I director, Robyn Afrik, now serves on the National DE&I Directors Network for NACo as well.

DE&I OPENING DOOR TO
**COMPREHENSIVE
SEXUALITY ED**

*Planned Parenthood Aligned
Sex Ed in Schools*

Planned Parenthood has partnered with sexuality activist organizations in creating and advancing Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) for schools.

Advocating under the umbrella of Diversity Equity and Inclusion on LGBTQ/sexuality issues for sex ed is often used to justify approval of CSE curriculum for students, as well as to quiet the voices of parents who may oppose CSE for multiple reasons, including the over sexualization of children, promotion of unhealthy sexual behaviors, and potential exposure to abortion advocacy.

CSE works to change student thinking on youth sexual behaviors and abortion, changing the conversation from sexual risk avoidance and pregnancy prevention to promotion of sexual pleasure, which may lead to an increased risk of students facing an unplanned pregnancy and contemplating an abortion. Children may be taught they can separate from the beliefs of their families and churches and become an ally to others who think differently about the sexuality agenda. Additionally, CSE curriculum promotes the use of resource websites which often include abortion topics and the ability for a student to search for a nearby abortion provider. **In California, CSE has culminated in abortions facilitated at school without parental consent.**

More information on Comprehensive Sexuality Education is available [at alliance114.com](http://alliance114.com), including the important documentary, *No Opt Out Allowed: California Sex Ed*. Michigan governmental, non-profit, and school influences pushing CSE are outlined [here](#), including Ottawa County Health Department's Sexuality Educator, who is on the board of MOASH, and provides support to the push for Comprehensive Sexuality Education with local school districts. MOASH advocates for Comprehensive Sexuality Education, as well as for legislative changes to allow for abortion without parental consent.

MOASH recently released a [K-5 Consent Toolkit from MOASH](#), promoted in the [Whole Child Quarterly](#) put out by Michigan School Health Coordinators' Association (MISCHCA), of which OAISD Consultant Stacey Sills is the treasurer. MOASH and Planned Parenthood are promoted as sexual health resources on page 14 of the toolkit.

Ottawa County's DEI Department Director, Robyn Afrik, now sits on the board of the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District (OAISD). Robyn Afrik was publicly endorsed by Commissioner DeJong to the Allendale School Board for this role, before her opponent dropped out of the race. OAISD consultants promote Comprehensive Sexuality Education to county school districts.

Additional information on Planned Parenthood's push for CSE on a national scale is available through the [Protect Child Health Coalition](#), including [COMPREHENSIVE SEX EDUCATION: THE HARMFUL EFFECTS ON CHILDREN](#).

RACE FORWARD

Actions of Note

Race Forward worked with the Biden Administration on implementing a racial equity executive order on Biden's first day in office, which is now being implemented across federal agencies.

Based on its work with GARE, which has now spread across the US, Race Forward is now speaking into the implementation of similar work in Biden's federal government.

In March of 2022, Race Forward launched a campaign to specifically combat parents defending children against CRT/DEI indoctrination and sexuality issues in schools, identifying Michigan and other swing states as early states to target. (The NEA, leaders of the Women's March, and numerous other well-funded progressive organizations are involved.)

CONCLUSION

*DE&I Department
Ottawa County, Michigan*

CONCLUSION

As Republican leaders and parents nationwide address DE&I/CRT and Planned Parenthood CSE aligned sexualized content in schools, the Ottawa County Commissioners continue to invest \$270K yearly and voice their support for the work of the DEI office, which promotes GARE membership and progressive ideology to our townships and cities, as well as to counties across the state.

While stating it is merely looking to root out elusive implicit bias from county policies, **the Ottawa County DEI Department is giving a foothold to the ideology of the left and membership with progressive GARE through our county bureaucracy.**

Rather than promoting the teaching, policies, and alliance with progressive organizations with ties to abortion and reproductive rights, we ought to look to Conservative minority thought leaders on issues of diversity and inclusion to address true problems with true solutions for all people in our county. Republican and Democrat citizens alike are taking note of the Ottawa County Commissioner's lack of discernment towards and support of the progressive aligned agenda of the DEI Department.

SUPPORTIVE IMAGES

A sampling of additional postings and articles which include abortion and reproductive justice content from Race Forward, Colorlines, and The Othering & Belonging Institute can be found **[HERE](#)** (click on an image to view as a gallery).



PO Box 802 Jenison MI 49429
ottawaimpact.com