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CULTURE

L.A. Public Transit Encouraged Employees to Read Material on 'Anti-Racism,' Undergo 'Unconscious Bias' Training

By ZACHARY EVANS | June 23, 2020 3:22 PM

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The Los Angeles public transportation system, a taxpayer-funded body, has actively encouraged its employees to read material on “anti-racism” and participate in “unconscious bias” training.

Screenshots of emails provided to NATIONAL REVIEW show that L.A. Metro forwarded missives from the body’s Office of Civil Rights to all employees, encouraging workers to take part in online company discussions on “unconscious bias.” Those discussions were scheduled to take place during weekday working hours on June 17 at 12 P.M. and 3 P.M., and June 18 at 9 A.M. and 12 P.M.



“OCR is launching a Courageous Conversations Online Series to make time and space for all employees to share their stories and experiences with supervisors and colleagues,” read an email sent to all employees from a generic L.A. Metro address earlier this month. “The objective is to discuss strategies to counteract potential unconscious bias within Metro work environments.”

employees view a 24-minute video course on “unconscious bias” by the CEO of **Rework Work**, a company dedicated to improving “work culture” through diversity hiring and training. Rework Work helps clients “recruit and retain top diverse talent” and gives career strategy services, including courses on building a resume.

The course on unconscious bias is free **until August 31** on LinkedIn. Another course by Rework Work, called “**Inclusive Recruiting**,” sells for \$275 on its website. For \$197, clients can book a one-on-one “career strategy session” with CEO Stacey Gordon. There is a substantial body of research that suggests the impact of “bias training” in the workplace is **likely negligible**, and may even exacerbate underlying biases.

In addition to the emails, Metro distributed a copy of the newly-launched OCR newsletter “Civil Writes” to its employees, explaining topics such as “white privilege,” “non-racism vs. anti-racism,” and “racial microaggressions.”

The newsletter also recommends that employees deepen their understanding of “anti-racism” — a relatively recent innovation in critical theory, which holds that all white people inherently harbor racist attitudes that must be proactively purged — by reading a number of recently published popular books, including *How to be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi and *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo.

“Our nation has experienced back to back to back...deaths of Black people necessitating the resurgence of ‘BLACK LIVES MATTER!’ We have seen (or have been to) protests, listened to the news, viewed social media postings and read articles that have brought up topics such as white privilege, microaggression, and anti-racism, just to name a few,” wrote Jonaura Wisdom, chief civil rights officer at the Metro, in her entry in the newsletter titled “Words of Wisdom.”

Court case, in which justices ruled 6-3 that the Civil Rights Act forbids discrimination against gay and transgender people.

L.A. Metro also encouraged employees to take an eight minute, 46 second moment of “reflection” on June 9, the day of the funeral of George Floyd. For the “reflection” period, Metro initially provided employees with black armbands that “were later swapped out to new ones with the phrase “#NoMoreNames” written on them as an expression of support for the movement to not add any more names to the list of people killed at the hands of police brutality,” according to one email.

“If you choose to wear an armband, as it is optional, please wear it around your left bicep,” another email informed employees, saying Metro would continue to distribute the armbands on June 11 and 12.

The L.A. Metro told NATIONAL REVIEW in an email, “These actions are consistent with our agency’s ongoing efforts to ensure racial justice within the Metro organization. We have established an Office of Civil Rights to ensure our agency meets or exceeds federal, state, and local civil rights requirements. This office promotes universal equity for both customers and employees.”

The L.A. Metro receives a majority of its **funding** from **various sales taxes**, which together bring in tens of millions of dollars monthly. It is not clear how diverse the Metro’s workforce is, although according to a 2016 **report**, the Metro offers customer information in ten languages and services mostly Hispanic and African American customers.



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