

## FORUM

## EDITORIAL

HOUSEHOLDER: BROKEN GOVERNMENT

## Repeal all of HB 6 — legislation formed in bribery and corruption

Our editorial board has repeatedly called for full repeal of House Bill 6 — the 2019 law hatched as part of a racketeering conspiracy that just led a federal jury to find former House Speaker Larry Householder and former Ohio GOP Chair Matt Borges guilty of felonies that could land them in prison for two decades.

Parts of HB 6 were repealed in 2021, but the bill is still forcing Ohio ratepayers to hand over a cumulative \$130,376 per day — almost \$151 million so far — to prop up two money-losing (and polluting) coal plants, one in Indiana. The bill also let utilities off the hook for energy-efficiency standards and rolled back Ohio's renewable-energy standards.

Why wasn't HB 6 repealed in full two years ago? Apparently, Statehouse leaders like the anti-clean energy parts of it.

**The proper way to secure changes in Ohio's renewable-energy and energy-efficiency standards and/or to require ratepayer coal subsidies is through a clean law, legally passed.**

As reported in cleveland.com's "Capitol Letter," Ohio Senate President Matt Huffman still opposes a full HB 6 repeal since he supports its renewable-energy rollbacks. He also suggested the ratepayer coal subsidies could be revisited but should continue if the two coal plants are still losing money.

Wrong positions.

No law enacted through fraud, bribery and corruption should stand.

That House Bill 6 still does stand, even after key parts of it — including its nuclear bailout and a lucrative "decoupling" fee — were repealed is an indictment of Statehouse indifference to pay-to-play corruption.

How corrupt is HB 6? Just about every which way.

House Bill 6 was at the heart of the \$61 million conspiracy federal attorneys just successfully prosecuted in the case against Householder and Borges in a Cincinnati courtroom. HB 6 was the reason the conspiracy aimed to elect Householder speaker in 2019, win passage of House Bill 6 that year and then defend it through a no-holds-barred effort to intimidate, hire away or otherwise thwart those seeking to get a repeal-HB 6 issue on the Ohio ballot.

"Larry Householder illegally sold the statehouse, and thus he ultimately betrayed the great people of Ohio he was elected to serve," U.S. Attorney Kenneth L. Parker said in a statement after the March 9 guilty verdicts. "Householder and his enterprise conspired to violate the racketeering statute through honest services wire fraud, receipt of millions of dollars in bribes and money laundering," added the statement from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Ohio.

In other words, HB 6 was the aim of this betrayal; the goal of the Statehouse fire sale.

"From March 2017 to March 2020, the enterprise traded millions of dollars in bribery campaign donations in exchange for Householder's and the enterprise's help in passing House Bill 6. The defendants then also worked to corruptly ensure that HB 6 went into effect by defeating a ballot initiative to overturn the legislation," the statement continued.

Translation: Householder and his Statehouse loyalists sold out the people of Ohio to enrich themselves and to pass a single piece of legislation — House Bill 6.

Conclusion: House Bill 6 is tainted, born in corruption, and must be repealed. In full.

Surely, Huffman sees the twisted message he sends when he says he still likes the law well enough not to want to repeal its remaining provisions.

What he's really saying is that he thinks a law that's the fruit of corruption is OK, as long as what it contains suits him.

The proper way to secure changes in Ohio's renewable-energy and energy-efficiency standards and/or to require ratepayer coal subsidies is through a clean law, legally passed, without the benefit of a multimillion-dollar dark-money conspiracy at the Statehouse.

That's the stance that Huffman and other Statehouse leaders should take: Repeal HB 6 in full and address renewable energy and coal subsidies in a clean bill, cleanly considered.

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## COMMENTARY FROM THE COMMUNITY

## Insidious effects of 'colorism' are felt from the royals to adoptions

Cliff Anthony

In his recent media blitz to promote his book "Spare," Prince Harry claimed other royal family members were concerned his children wouldn't be white like them.

Buckingham Palace has yet to respond. If Harry's accusation is true, it illustrates that the scourge of colorism has already seeped into the heart of London.

Prince Harry's wife, the Duchess of Sussex, Meghan Markle, is a biracial American. The obsession with colorism has reportedly caused a rift in the royal family, which prompted the couple to seek a peaceful life in the United States.

Like climate change, colorism is a global issue.

While I was growing up in India, my mother would admonish me for playing in the sun. She feared the suntan would turn my brown skin dark. Black! She had reason to worry, because the brown and dark people were unappreciated. At the same time, fair-skinned people were — still are — put on a pedestal, like the reverberating applause for a 6-foot-4 basketball player as opposed to the lukewarm reception for a 5-foot, 2-inch counterpart.

My mother has passed away since then. But her reasoning of some 50 years ago remains true.

There are three pigments in India — brown, such as mine that doesn't need to visit a tanning salon; dark; and fair-skinned, aka light-skinned. Simply put, white!

Like it or not, the white hue receives preferential treatment over the dark hue.

"Dozens of research studies have shown that skin tone and other racial features play powerful roles in who gets ahead and who does not. These factors regularly determine who gets hired, who gets convicted and who gets elected," Shankar Vendantam, author of "The Hidden Brain: How Our Unconscious Minds Elect Presidents, Control Markets, Wage Wars and Save Our Lives," put it in a 2010 New York Times opinion article.

Take Bollywood. The lead male and female actors, the supporting actors, and even the extras who gyrate in dance scenes are predominantly fair-skinned. Of late, there's a penchant for sprinkling blondes from Europe in dance scenes, as if they were glittering decoration pieces.

The rampant colorism in Bollywood prompted Priyanka Chopra, an Indian-born actor and 2000 Miss World, to cry foul in a recent BBC interview:

"I was called 'black cat,' 'dusky.' I mean, what does 'dusky' even mean in a country where we are literally all brown? I thought I was not pretty enough. I believed that I would have to work a lot harder, even though I thought I was probably a little more talented than my fellow actors who were lighter-skinned. But I thought that was right because it was so normalized," Chopra said in the interview.

In the United States, Chopra has acted in "Love

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## COMMENTARY FROM THE COMMUNITY

## Honest instruction on Black history is crucial

John Bertschler

These days, we hear a crescendo of protest against the teaching of race-related subjects in public schools. Some, such as the administration of Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, claim such material "lacks educational value" or that it promotes an agenda (usually a "woke" agenda).

From where I stand, such classes teach the two essential lessons of all history. As such, they provide not just educational value but the core understanding of our life as a nation.

The first lesson, uttered by Lord Acton, is that "power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

There was a time when white Americans held absolute power over Black Americans. They exercised that power corruptly, by owning them, by buying and selling them like cattle, and in fact by using them as beasts of burden. This stole the lives of enslaved people and morally corrupted the lives of slaveowners.

Yet it happened, because slaveowners realized the economic benefit of doing so. It is uncomfortable to ponder this. As I follow the national conversation on this topic, it seems that many parents are horrified at the prospect that their precious children may go to school and learn that slavery was a bad thing, or that apartheid and Jim Crow weren't really fair, and might feel discomfort at these shocking revelations.

But this discomfort must be faced when we acknowledge the second lesson.

The second lesson, heard so commonly that it is perhaps a cliché, is that "those who fail to learn the lessons of history are doomed to repeat it."

People of today are vulnerable to the same greed,



Commenting on the colorism that pervades in the Indian film industry, Priyanka Chopra says she was called "black cat" and "dusky." Joel C Ryan, Invision via AP

Again," "The White Tiger," "Citadel," and other Hollywood productions.

Unfortunately, such colorism is prevalent in the United States.

For instance, the cost of adopting a white child is higher than the price for a black child, according to NPR's "The Race Project." It reported in 2013 that the adoption cost for a white child was \$35,000 plus legal expenses, while the price for a black girl was about \$18,000 and for a biracial child between \$24,000 and \$26,000, plus legal expenses.

The brown and black pigments stand out and make assimilation with the majority white population impossible. In contrast, Italian and German immigrants who landed in droves on U.S. shores in the early 1900s could quickly blend in because of their white skin tone.

Blacks and browns don't have this luxury. Colorism can't be wiped clean with a wet towel, like erasing a black sketch on a white dry board.

The salad bowl concept, which celebrates diversity, appears to have fallen victim to hatred-driven politics. In elections, xenophobia has become an effective bait to fish for votes.

Anthony is the author of "Tears in God's Own Country," a novel dealing with colorism. He lives in a Cleveland suburb.

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THE PLAIN DEALER

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