

TESTIMONY
House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Crime and Corrections
Alden K. Lanphear, Executive Director
Woodrock, Inc.

January 13, 1998

Thank you for inviting me to testify on behalf of Bill 1880. My name is Alden Lanphear and I am the Executive Director of Woodrock, a youth agency serving students between the ages of 9 and 18. Woodrock's mission is "to promote interracial, interethnic and intercultural harmony among youth. Our program model consists of a comprehensive array of programs ranging from in-school, after-school, family intervention, and wilderness experiences. Woodrock has been recognized nationally for its programs.

This past year Woodrock was one of seven agencies in the United States to receive a Hate Crime grant from the US Department of Education. Through the grant, we expanded our programs to the middle school level addressing hatred between racial and ethnic groups living in Kensington. During this grant, we provided five family Unity trips. These trips provided families of different racial backgrounds an opportunity to share a common experience such as a trip to Baltimore Aquarium. In surveying families after attending the trips, not only did communication improve between families, but communication improved between child and parent.

On June 14, 1997, the fifth Unity Activity was held at Woodrock Training Center located outside of Pottstown, Pennsylvania. Our Training Center provides all the weekend retreats, weeklong summer experiences and leadership training for youth and adults that reinforce our city-based programs. This Unity Day honors families of diverse backgrounds coming together to recognize and celebrate their similarities as well as their differences. The main speaker for the day was Floyd Cochran, who was the former national recruiter for the Aryan Nation. Floyd spoke to parents and youth, about the activities of hate groups and why we have to stand up against hate and bigotry everyday.

After his presentation, Floyd mentioned the Ku Klux Klan was giving out literature in the center of Boyertown, Pennsylvania at noon. Floyd his girlfriend and I decided to demonstrate against their hatred. Shortly after twelve noon seven Klan members dispersed themselves on four corners. I brought with me a camera and proceeded to take pictures. Three of the Klan members wore masks. One of the members wearing a mask immediately recognized Floyd Cochran. This individual decided to harass Floyd throughout the next hour. I felt a physical confrontation might take place. They left once the hour was up as part of agreement with the Boyertown Police Department. I also had the unfortunate opportunity to have a

conversation with Robert Woodley, Grand Dragon of Pennsylvania. At the end of the hour, Woodley informed me that the Klan had a good day by giving out 150 pieces of literature.

After reading about the commitment of the Boyertown Unity Coalition to stand up against the Klan, my wife and I joined the coalition. This group of dedicated Boyertown residents is very determined to rid their community of this hate group. This coalition replicated PROJECT LEMONADE in Pennsylvania. The project's mission is to turn about the Ku Klux Klan's public promotion of bigotry by using its own demonstrations as a vehicle to promote tolerance. In effect, the Klan's and other organized hate group's gatherings to recruit new members and promote their beliefs will instead become the focal point for public support of educational programs specifically designed to teach racial, ethnic and religious tolerance. The duration of each demonstration will determine how much money will be raised for organizations as the NAACP, Southern Poverty Law Center, Anti-Defamation League and the Boyertown Area Unity Coalition. The donations are based on a pledge. For example, ten cents a minute for every minute the Klan promotes in Boyertown. One member of the Boyertown Unity Coalition monitors the Klan's time and reports to the Coalition that they were promoting on a particular Saturday for 60 minutes. Unity Coalition members would then call people who pledged and tell the person they promoted for sixty minutes. The person who pledged ten cents would then send a check for six dollars to the Boyertown Unity Coalition designated for one of the four organizations. To date the PROJECT LEMONADE in Boyertown has raised over \$3,000.

Pennsylvania ranks near the top for having more hate groups than any other state. Why does Pennsylvania have so many hate groups? It is time that Woodrock, Boyertown Unity Coalition, The Education & Vigilance Network and other groups across the commonwealth promoting tolerance must be supported. Passing legislation such as Bill 1880 is supporting our efforts.

Individuals with strong convictions never hide behind masks. This is not about freedom of speech, but fear and intimidation. Historically, the Ku Klux Klan has used the robe and mask to intimidate citizens of the United States. Wearing a mask is a contradiction of freedom of speech. Freedom of speech is an expression and wearing a mask hides the expression. The mask is a symbol of fear hate and intimidation, not freedom of speech. Let us together get these masks off!