

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE  
**GLENN GROTHMAN**

*Wisconsin's 6th District*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Grothman Finds Truth About Conditions in Urban Schools**

(Washington, D.C.) – This week, at a House Education and Labor Committee hearing, Congressman Glenn Grothman (R-Glenbeulah) questioned experts about the conditions of urban school districts and why they often have lower graduation rates and more criminal activity than their suburban and rural counterparts.

The bulk of Grothman's questioning focused on Mr. Dion Pierre, who has attended schools in both rural and urban districts. Mr. Pierre contended that the poor conditions in urban school districts are not due to a lack of money being put toward the problem, but the breakdown of the family and the dysfunctional home lives of some of the students.

**Witnesses Included:**

- Mr. John C. Brittain
  - Professor of Law at the University of the District of Columbia Law School
- Ms. Linda Darling-Hammond, Ed.D.
  - President and CEO of the Learning Policy Institute
- Ms. Maritza White
- Mr. Daniel J. Losen, M.ED, J.D.
  - Director of the Center for Civil Rights Remedies at the Civil Rights Project at UCLA
- Mr. Dion J. Pierre
- Mr. Richard A. Carranza
  - New York City Schools Chancellor at the New York City Department of Education

**Excerpts of Grothman's questioning**

**Congressman Glenn Grothman:** “Mr. Pierre, thanks for being here. You [have] some guts. You are mentioning things that aren’t mentioned by some of the other witnesses. I’ll comment on a couple of them. In your testimony you say, ‘These problems are aggravated in communities with high rates of family dysfunction.’ Could you elaborate on that a little bit?”

**Mr. Dion Pierre:** *“If you were to visit some predominantly minority communities in New York City, certainly not all, you’d find, I think, that there’s a correlation between behavioral problems and broken families. Someone here, I think it was Ms. White, who said, if students don’t have a loving home, they come to school in a very bad mood, and I think that’s likely true.”*

**Grothman:** “We have a lot of people, other people here, who are experts. Mr. Pierre, [do you] think that maybe some of these problems of kids at school are due to the families they’re from, the family structure, are there any studies on that to show if that could be a cause of gap between test scores or graduation?”

**Pierre:** *“If I can just say, many studies have shown for years that students who come from two parent households do better. But the social agenda of the Democratic party forbids them from promoting two parent households.”*

**Grothman:** “I know we have a lot of programs out there that kind of discourage two parent families. Why do you think with all the people asking questions here that that topic never comes up?”

**Pierre:** *“I have no clue. I’ll be 25 in July and I’ve spent my entire life wondering why progressives, Democrats, don’t speak more about the disillusion of the black family. This is something that has been going on since 1963. It’s something that is now happening in many white families. It just doesn’t make sense to me that you can tell an entire community that 70 percent of births out of wedlock is acceptable. It’s not.”*

**Grothman:** “And you think that can result in the children not doing as well in school?”

**Pierre:** *“Absolutely, and I think that as a country, we don’t take black Americans seriously if we allow some of these cultural problems to persist. As I said earlier, someone like Barack Obama went to a private school in Hawaii. His black experience is totally different than mine. My mother gave birth to me just months after her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, and she did an okay job, but she didn’t always have all the answers.”*

**Grothman:** “Okay, well it’s interesting you’ve been in a variety of New York schools, a variety of schools in North Carolina, so you’re certainly qualified. It’s a mystery to me, not only on this topic, but other topics why that’s not brought up by people who purport to claim that they want to solve some problems here. You say something else, ‘in many cases students are influenced by mainstream culture which often encourages minority youth towards transgressive behavior.’ Want to elaborate on that a little?”

**Pierre:** *“Yes, Henry Gates Louis Jr., a prominent African American Studies scholar from Harvard University, once observed that at some point in the ‘60s it became fashionable for*

*members of the black upper class and middle class to aspire to a more authentic idea of blackness, which in the '60s became urban, rebellious, against the 1960s. Gates saw how terrible this was for the black community. He said, by the 1990s you have Tommy Hilfiger pushing the thug life and gangster life. Rap music of course over the years has started to become a bit more female friendly, but for years it encouraged poor treatment of women. It encouraged secular values, not going to church and an emphasis on material things.”*

**Grothman:** “I wonder why these artists are promoted in the popular culture like geniuses who should be followed. Can you guess why the popular culture or the people who decide who will be on the cover of the big magazines keep promoting these people?”

**Pierre:** *“It’s what sells. I don’t think they take black Americans seriously. It’s embarrassing to me when I hear people say that black students can only get a good education in a white school. It seems to me that black Americans who have a noble history in this country should have some role in making our communities attractive so that people want to come to us.”*

**Grothman:** “One more question. Just playing around, looking at the numbers. It appears as though the District of Columbia, if it were a state, would have the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> highest spending per pupil in the country, their test scores are the lowest in the country. If money is the answer to education, how do you explain the Washington, D.C. schools?”

**Ms. Linda Darling-Hammond:** *“That’s what happens when Congress tries to run a school system.”*

**Pierre:** *“We agree.”*

[Click here](#) to view Grothman’s remarks.

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*U.S. Rep. Glenn Grothman is serving his third term representing Wisconsin’s 6th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives.*



Link to the release: <https://grothman.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=1047>