

Opponent Testimony on H.B. 239
Ohio House Primary and Secondary Education Committee

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Good evening Chairman Blessing, Vice-Chair Jones, Ranking Member Robinson, and Committee Members. My name is Alfred Davis. I am the pastor of the Bible Baptist Church in Richfield, Ohio, and a board member of the Ohio Christian Alliance. Thank you for the opportunity to give testimony in opposition of House Bill 239, the Testing Reduction Act.

Our Founding Fathers were very concerned about the prospect of future generations losing sight of the reasons for which they broke away from England in order to form a new and independent country. They believed strongly that knowledge and understanding of our history is vitally important to the preservation of a free and self-governing Republic. Thomas Jefferson, for example, in a letter to William Charles Jarvis, September 28, 1820, said:

"I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education. This is the true corrective of abuses of constitutional power."

Currently, Ohio public schools are required to instruct and inform student in the history and importance of the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, the Northwest Ordinance, and the Ohio State Constitution. Knowledge and understanding of these foundational documents are essential in build future generations of Ohioans who are properly prepared and able to function as free citizens, citizens who can safeguard the freedoms and rights secured for us by the Founding Fathers, citizens that understand who we are and what our country stands for. After all, as historian David McCullough observed, "History is who we are and why we are the way we are."

House Bill 239, the Testing Reduction Act, while it may have good intentions, will have the effect of reducing the amount of time spent in the classroom teaching Ohio's students the importance of the great ideas and values that our founding documents encapsulate. Teachers press for time will gradually limit and possibly even eliminate the teaching of these important documents. Keeping the testing requirements will help to ensure that teachers spend the time necessary to ensure that Ohio's students are properly educated and prepared to function as free citizens and transmit these important ideas and values to future generations.

Therefore, I respectfully urge the Members of the Ohio House Primary and Secondary Education Committee to defeat House Bill 239, the Testing Reduction Act, to ensure that Ohio's students continue to be taught the value of our county and stat's founding documents.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions from the Committee.

"The disadvantage of men not knowing the past is that they do not know the present."

G. K. Chesterton

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