

SB 121 Opponent Testimony

Heather Groves

Senate Education Committee:

Madam Chair Lehner, Vice Chairman Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor and members of the Senate Education Committee:

My name is Heather Groves and I am a licensed nurse in the state of Ohio. As a nurse and as a mother of 3 school aged children, I thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony for Senate Bill 121, which would require the State Board of Education to adopt health education standards and to require that only statewide venereal disease education standards and curriculum be approved by the General Assembly.

I stand in opposition to this bill for several reasons, the first being that ORC 3313.60 already establishes a health curriculum for the state of Ohio that includes nutrition, the harmful effects of drugs, alcohol and tobacco, venereal disease education, personal safety and assault and dating violence prevention, leaving the individual school districts to establish the health standards that best fit their own population of students. As you are aware, different municipalities will face different health disparities, and current Ohio law allows for an individualized approach to health education that is flexible enough to meet the unique needs of each district across the state.

As a mom, I am concerned with the provision in SB 121 that removes the approval process by the General Assembly to change or modify the health standards and curriculum in the state of Ohio except for in the case of venereal disease education, effectively removing this vital responsibility from the hands of “We the People” and placing it into the hands of the Board of Education. We have seen this play out across the country, where in states like California, liberal sex education and gender identity standards were adopted despite the outcry and protests of parents across the state. SB 121 states that only venereal disease education standards and curriculum be approved by the General Assembly, effectively pushing parents and lawmakers out of any discussion on the remainder of sex education curriculum while paving the way for special interest groups to gleefully take our place.

Limiting the state of Ohio’s role in the education process by adopting national standards does not guarantee better educational outcomes, as we have painfully seen demonstrated by the national failure known as Common Core. A 2019 article titles, “Nearly a decade later, did the Common Core work? New research offers clues”, states

the following, “A new study, released in April through a federally funded research center, shows that states that changed their standards most dramatically by adopting a... common core of internationally benchmarked standards in math and language arts, (known as Common Core) didn’t outpace other states on federal NAEP exams. By 2017 — seven years after most states had adopted them — the standards appear to have led to modest declines in fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math scores...falling short of the far-reaching ambitions of Common Core advocates.”

On April 27th of this year, the Pioneer Institute of Public Policy released their own study summed up in an article titled: Study Finds Historic Drop in National Reading and Math Scores Since Adoption of Common Core Curriculum Standards that states the following: “As we approach the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the United States Department of Education in May, shocking trends in student performance should lead us to reconsider the federal role in education and whether the initiative for policymaking should be returned to local schools, communities, and states.

Breaking with decades of slow improvement, U.S. reading and math scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and other assessments have seen historic declines since most states implemented national Common Core English and math curriculum standards six years ago, according to a new study published by Pioneer Institute. While Common Core was promoted as improving the international competitiveness of U.S. students in math, our international standing has remained low while the skills of average and lower performing American students have dropped in both math and reading.”

The health of our children is vitally important, which is why I oppose adopting national health education standards and limiting the input of those who are most invested in the health and safety of Ohio’s children. From No Child Left Behind to Common Core, we have decades of failed national standards that confirm that applying one size fits all standards to educational requirements rarely meets expectations and often alienates parents and students from the educational process. The federal government has no constitutional authority over the education of Ohio’s youth, and I believe that this is something that you should honor and protect by rejecting SB 121. Thank you for the opportunity to advocate for my children by voicing my objection to this bill... if SB 121 is adopted my voice will be so this is an opportunity that I cherish.

Heather Groves

Sincerely,

Heather Groves

<https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-sex-education-california-20190510-story.html>

<https://dailycaller.com/2019/07/08/california-sexual-education/>

<https://www.chalkbeat.org/2019/4/29/21121004/nearly-a-decade-later-did-the-common-core-work-new-research-offers-clues>

<https://pioneerinstitute.org/academic-standards/study-finds-historic-drop-in-national-reading-and-math-scores-since-adoption-of-common-core-curriculum-standards/>

<https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/common-core-has-failed-now-what/>