



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
HOUSE BILL 73  
REGARDS EDUCATIONAL TESTING, ASSESSMENT, AND RETENTION  
MAY 18, 2021  
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Chair Manning, Vice Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson, and honorable Members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee:

My name is Kathy Johnson, and I am Assistant Ohio State Director for Proclaiming Justice to the Nations. Thank you for the opportunity to express my comments today about House Bill 73 - Regards Educational Testing, Assessment, and Retention.

I understand that House Bill 73 is a bipartisan bill that seeks to reduce educational testing requirements. In some aspects, this may be a beneficial amendment to reduce certain existing and required testing, such as the college admission assessment that is currently required of all students. However, the absolute exception to any relaxation of required examinations must be in the areas of end-of-course testing for American History and American Government.

Recall that in 2012, the 129<sup>th</sup> General Assembly passed the Founding of America Documents Curriculum, for grades 8–12. This milestone in Ohio education includes and requires one full credit hour comprised of one-half credit in American History and one-half credit in American Government, with an end-of-course examination for each. These curricula include study of and proficiency in the original texts of the Declaration of Independence, the Northwest Ordinance, the U.S. Constitution with emphasis on the Bill of Rights, the Ohio Constitution, and the Federalist and Anti-Federalist Papers. The success of these curricula has been individually verifiable because of the separate testing requirement for each.

We must acknowledge that House Bill 73 does not alter or change the statutory requirement for instruction in American History or American Government.

However, what House Bill 73 does require is the altering and combining of the end-of-course testing for American History and American Government from two separate examinations down to one. This would necessarily weaken the emphasis on, and create a reduction in, the quantifiable measure of student mastery for these extremely central and important subjects. These are areas of education for which content accountability for school districts, teachers and students must be prioritized, and cannot be relaxed. The separate and equal examination requirements are the decisive measures of accomplishment that must remain solid, continuing, and uncompromised.

The classroom time spent on these subjects is an investment in America and in Ohio that must not be diminished. If objective measurements are weakened, we may see a drift toward an honor system for allocated time and teaching for these subjects that could very easily and quickly become reduced, considering the many responsibilities and mandates of the day-to-day classroom environment. Decreasing accountability for this educational material would decrease the mastery of the material.

The two-part examination requirement which focuses on the specific areas of American History and American Government absolutely must be strongly maintained and, if anything, strengthened to also reinclude these subjects in the high school graduation test.

American History and Government are the very foundations of American citizenship. The rights and responsibilities of citizenship must create a common thread that connects all Americans.

Additionally, our youngsters of today are the leaders of tomorrow. Each of our youth who may eventually choose to serve in public office will swear an oath to the US Constitution and to the Ohio Constitution. Those who may serve in the military will one day swear an oath to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic. These oaths must be respected, understood, and regarded as solemn and sincere promises. The concepts and history behind these oaths of office must be well learned and respected if our Constitutional Republic and our great State of Ohio are to endure.

It is for these important reasons that we must firmly oppose House Bill 73. I must respectfully ask the honorable members of the Primary and Secondary Education Committee to unite in rejecting this amendment to existing statute.