



Representative Bill Roemer

38th House District

HB 529 Sponsor Testimony

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony today on House Bill 529. As you all know very well, K-12 education has been a flashpoint in many communities recently, and as such, many parents have shown a heightened interest in what their students are learning. In some cases, school board meetings have become quite heated and even led to serious altercations. Having watched these scenes unfold, we believe all parties would benefit from additional transparency measures to make curriculum information more accessible to parents.

Currently, curricula and syllabi must be made available to parents upon request – like any other public records request. Through this legislation, we intend to make this information even more accessible to the public by requiring it be posted online in a conspicuous place. The bill before you would require all schools – by July 1st of each year – to post course syllabi and links to or titles of all textbooks and course materials on that school’s website. The bill also requires this information to remain accessible for two years, and to be updated within 30 days after any alterations are made.

Irrespective of the subject matter, we feel it is incumbent upon us as public officials to aid transparency and accessibility of learning materials for parents. To be clear, this bill is not an attempt to aid or encourage efforts of censorship in our schools; rather, this measure is meant to inform parents and help them complement their child’s learning. Likewise, this bill in no manner deals specifically with critical race theory, comprehensive sex education, or any other specific topic – it merely provides information to parents. We ought to do all we can to help parents help

their children, regardless of the subject matter they may be working through in their studies.

We hope this legislation will have the added benefit of cutting down on misunderstandings about what is or is not being taught, and therefore also reduce contentious confrontations between parents and school officials. This approach gets schools out ahead of these conflicts, and may also prevent burdensome public records workloads if such requests arise.

Chair Manning and members of the Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to testify today – we welcome any questions you may have.