

Opponent Testimony for House Bill 322
Sharon Kim, OPAWL
State and Local Government Committee
September 20, 2021

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chairwoman John, Ranking Member Representative Kelly, and Members of the State and Local Government Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony in regards to House Bill 322. My name is Sharon Kim. I work in clinical research and am also a mother to two young children, one of whom is a first grader in Columbus City Schools. I am also a member of OPAWL, a statewide grassroots community of Asian and Asian American and Pacific Islander Women and non-binary people in Ohio. Our organization is a multi-ethnic, multi-generational community and we represent the diverse diaspora from Asia and the Pacific Islands. I strongly oppose House Bill 322.

As a parent and a member of the fast growing Asian American community in Central Ohio, I strongly oppose this bill because students deserve to learn accurate and complete American history, which includes but is not limited to Asian American and Pacific Islander American/AAPI history. Additionally, racism experienced by AAPI's is inextricably tied to American history and cannot be ignored or erased. Our children deserve to learn about what factors led to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and U.S. involvement in important historical events like the Secret War in Laos, which became the most heavily bombed country in world history.

If this bill passes, a censored and skewed version of history and current events that highlights a select few will be taught in the classroom, completely ignoring and erasing the history of Indigenous, Black, Brown, Asian, Pacific Islander, other communities of color, and the LGBTQIA+ communities. The bills are so vaguely worded in terms of defining what is and is not allowed to be taught in the classroom. The chilling effect of this purposefully vague language is that our teachers will be fearful of approaching topics that are challenging but factual. It is imperative, now more than ever, for our children to learn about these events as they are important parts of our country's foundational history.

Additionally, HB 322 distorts patriotism by denying the need to fight for equal and equitable rights for all people. It views American history as so shameful we have to hide it, rather than learn from it. It also ignores the wounds families experience when outdated and damaging content remains unchallenged.

As a parent and a member of the fast growing Asian American community in Central Ohio and a member of the growing AAPI Ohio population, I ask you to strongly consider my testimony opposing House Bill 322 and vote NO on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Kim
Member
OPAWL