

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: September 18, 2021

Name: Cynthia Tancer

Are you representing: Yourself Organization

Organization (If Applicable): _____

Position/Title: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Best Contact Telephone: 214-496-6136 Email: ctancer@mc.com

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): HB 327

Specific Issue: Prohibit teaching, advocating or promoting divisive concepts

Are you testifying as a: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

Will your testimony be written, spoken, or both? Written

Please provide a brief statement on your position:

I vehemently oppose HB 327.

Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.

Opponent Testimony for House Bill 327
Cynthia Tancer
State and Local Government Committee
September 18, 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 testify today. My name is Cynthia Tancer, I am a parent, an engaged member of our democracy, a founding member of the grassroots organization Honesty for Ohio Education and a long time Breakthrough Public Schools board member. I strongly oppose HB 327.

Like many of us, I wear many hats and play many roles and in all of these roles I oppose this bill because it aims to censor and limit what can be taught in the classroom. Our students **deserve better**, they need a complete and honest education. I believe honesty in education requires the complete presentation and thorough examination of historical and current events, behaviors, and societal trends. It reflects and affirms diverse perspectives and identities, including race, sex, and faith. Grounded in credible research, widely-accepted sources, and integral narratives of lived experiences, it promotes open dialogue, debate, and written analysis. Educational honesty develops lifelong learners and engaged citizens who address complex issues, seek collaborative solutions, and help advance society. Complete presentation and thorough discussion of issues will prepare students to take the reins and improve our society in the 21st century and beyond.

HB 327 prohibits the teaching, instructing, promoting, and advocating of "**Divisive Concepts**" in Pre-K-12, higher education, and political subdivisions. Violations incur severe penalties, including: suspension and revocation of licensure, denial of tenure and employment, and withholding up to 100% of state funding. This is harmful to students as it encourages narrow, singular viewpoints that perpetuate racist, discriminatory and exclusionary abuse, trauma, behavior, and narratives. It normalizes how to perpetrate and tolerate abuse and trauma within school staff and students.

HB 327 harms the safety and emotional well-being of students by restricting

social-emotional learning programs. All of this is troubling, but I am most concerned that House Bill 327 devalues students by assuming they can't handle complex and sometimes conflicting ideas. Life is complex and we need to make sure our students have the tools and "muscle memory" to deal with complex issues. Schools are places where we should be encouraging student voice, student agency and advocacy for others, not limiting it as HB 327 does.

HB 327 has a vigilante component allowing an individual to accuse a teacher of teaching "divisive concepts", reminding me of the Salem Witch Trials in which potentially innocent women were scapegoated. Really, now we are going after teachers? In addition, the punishment for violations is **outrageously** punitive. We need strong teachers who teach honest/complete education, school districts who support these teachers and this, and similar legislation will make it harder to attract and retain high quality teachers in Ohio—another disservice to our youth.

Our society has become hyper-polarized and intolerant of differing viewpoints. This legislation just adds fuel to that fire by prohibiting what can be taught in the classroom. Let's trust our educators to teach an honest and complete history that will prepare our youth.

I ask you to strongly consider my testimony opposing HB 327 and vote NO on this bill. I would be happy to answer any additional questions or provide input as needed. You may reach me at cynthialtancer@gmail.com.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,
Cynthia Tancer
Honesty for Ohio Education