

Opponent Testimony for House Bill 322 OR House Bill 327
Dinorah Sánchez Loza, Assistant Professor, The Ohio State University, College of
Education and Human Ecology
State and Local Government Committee
September 21, 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 **Dinorah Sánchez Loza**. I am an Assistant Professor in the College of Education and Human Ecology at The Ohio State University where I focus my research and teaching on issues of educational inequality and, specifically, on the way race and class differentially impact youth political development. I also hold extensive experience as a high school teacher, having taught for seven years in an urban high school in California in addition to teaching students and supervising teacher-candidates in the Bay Area. I strongly oppose **HB 322**.

As an Assistant Professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning and former high school educator, I oppose this bill because students deserve to learn diverse accurate accounts and a complete American history including historical accounts that center Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian American and Pacific Islander American/AAPI communities. The social conditions and racialized dynamics experienced by Black, Latinx, and AAPI communities is inextricably tied to important historical events such as the legacies of slavery and US intervention abroad, as well as policies that existed in the US to specifically exclude such as the factors that led to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. This is American history and it cannot be ignored or erased. To do so will not only have negative academic ramifications for Ohio students (we will be ill-preparing them to enter spaces nationally and internationally with students who experience more rigorous and complete understandings of history and society), we will impede them from taking an informed part in our democracy.

Moreover, 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 vague language is that our teachers will be fearful of approaching topics that, however challenging, are factual. Given my research expertise on exactly what teachers teach about history and politics and how young people make sense of it, 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.

Moreover, the bill prohibits teachers from "discuss[ing] current events or widely debated and currently controversial issues of public policy or social affairs." This is directly in opposition to plethora of research that exists showing that students are most engaged in History and Civics when it is made relevant to their lives. Young people respond well to the discussion of topics they currently are experience or witnessing-- on this item alone you should vote NO. Again, this would not only disadvantage our students academically, it gravely threatens our

democracy since students will not have the opportunity to practice their research and debate skills about important policy and social issues.

Further, the bill prohibits teachers from teaching that it is any one individual “by virtue of the individual’s race or sex, is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously.” However, it also states that “no teacher can be required to affirm a belief in the systemic nature of racism. While I have observed zero educators throughout my extensive experience in education teach children that they are inherently racist, this language also prohibits teachers from discussing racism as a systemic issue. By prohibiting discussions at the individual and systemic level, this serves to prohibit any conversations about racism and how it functions in society. Moments and policies in US History such as Jim Crow and school segregation are undisputed US and World history. To bar teachers from engaging in these conversations will negatively impact Ohio students’ understandings of history that will no doubt come to bear on AP exam scores and college entrance applications at the very least.

As an Assistant Professor of Education and former high school educator whose research and expertise focuses on how the teaching of history and current political events greatly impacts how young people come to think and act as citizens, I ask you to strongly consider my testimony opposing HB 322 and vote NO on this bill.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,
Dinorah Sánchez Loza
Assistant Professor
The Ohio State University