

**Opponent Testimony for House Bill 322
Lisa Lazarus, Parent and Business Owner
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 testify today. My name is Lisa Lazarus. I am a former educator, a business owner, and the parent of a child who I have been planning to send to public schools in Ohio. I strongly oppose HB 322.

As a former educator and as a parent, I oppose this bill because it removes the autonomy of school districts and families to interpret and apply educational standards and encourages narrow, singular viewpoints that perpetuate racist and discriminatory narratives. As a business owner in Ohio, I oppose this bill because I want to be able to hire other Ohioans who can think critically and handle complex and conflicting ideas, and this bill would prevent students from being educated to have those skills.

By taking the rights of school districts and families away, this bill imposes a singular State viewpoint over teaching sensitive issues. In so doing, this bill deprives communities of Local Control over their kids' education. I moved to Ohio intentionally to live in Shaker Heights, as I know that the community strives to teach all students to think critically and to be able to make valid arguments. I know this because I grew up here and only recently moved back to the state, bringing my business with me. The fact that this bill is even up for discussion makes me rethink whether Ohio is a place I want to raise my child and work to grow my business. I am concerned I won't be able to find great talent, as this bill restricts young people's abilities to practice and obtain the skills necessary for job readiness and productive teamwork. This means that competitive talent will be driven away from Ohio at a time when our state desperately needs more great talent here. As a parent, I want my child to learn the skills she needs to excel, and if this bill passes, she will not learn to analyze, discuss, and debate important topics, and she will not learn to use her agency and voice to advocate for others. I am horrified by the thought that our legislators are considering preventing opportunities for Ohio's children to reckon with historical, social, and intellectual issues and to reconcile, grow, and heal as our children learn to create the solutions that Ohio, our country, and our world need.

As a parent, business owner, and former educator, I ask you to strongly consider my testimony opposing HB 322 and vote NO on this bill. I also ask you to vote NO on HB 327, and I have submitted a separate though similar letter stating my opposition to that bill as well.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to submit this written testimony.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Lazarus
Parent and Business Owner