

To Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair John, Ranking Member Kelly and members of the House State and Local Government Committee:

This is my testimony for HB 322 & 327 combined. My name is Merri Biechler and I am testifying in opposition to both of these house bills.

These bills are dangerous and threaten to derail the progress to make true, deep change in our culture. We can't be afraid of progress! Will it be uncomfortable? Yes. It is necessary? Yes. We owe the students of this state the right to discussion, the right to hear multiple points-of-view. Adding voices doesn't make us weaker, it makes us more resilient. We are a resilient people in this state and our students deserve to have a classroom where they can wrestle with our history and know many stories across the spectrum of race.

These bills create fear by design. They are harmful, restrictive, and political retribution is not the way forward. You have the ability to protect necessary, difficult conversations by killing these bills. We owe it to our students to foster true learning with educated instructors. This is not who we are in the state of Ohio. Reject these bills for a stronger Ohio.

Thank you.

Merri Biechler

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