

**Opponent Testimony for House Bill 327**

**Jon C. Walden**

**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 Jon Walden. I am a father to a high school student and attorney. I also have had the pleasure to work for the State of Ohio for more than twenty years, including many years with the Ohio Attorney General's office. I write to offer my strong opposition to HB 327.

I oppose HB 327 because it is a bad law not borne out of any need, but merely part of a string of copycat bills that are being offered in other states. This proposed bill does nothing to strengthen Ohio and make it better or more competitive. Instead, this bill merely uses vague and subjective language driven more by political agendas meant to divide rather than make us better.

This proposed bill also serves to remove a hallmark of Ohio legislation and jurisprudence by attempting to remove Local Control from communities over their educational environment and curriculum.

Likewise, this language seeks to divide the workforce by attempting to prohibit training that provides more depth and diverse thought. In my current position, discussions and trainings that include diverse thought have made us a better organization and a more cohesive agency.

But HB 327 would seek to remove this ability for diversity and equity in the workplace and in the classroom. This bill will only serve to hinder workforce development much needed by our state.

I urge you to vote not on the bill. Thank you, again, for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon C. Walden, Esq.

Westerville, Ohio