

Testimony

Provided to the Ohio House Primary and Secondary Education Committee

OPPOSING

HB 103: Establish Ohio Social Studies Task Force

PROVIDED BY:

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Chairman Bird, and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony against HB 103. We are part of the Talawanda School District, a district of about 3,000 students and their families in western Butler County. We strongly oppose HB 103, a bill attempting to take legislative control of the development and approval process of Ohio's state social studies content standards.

There are three reasons why members of this committee should vote NO on HB 103:

(1) House Bill 103 replaces current social studies education standards, set by Ohio educators in consultation with national associations specializing in the research and knowledge of social studies subject matter, with curriculum created by outside interests to drive an extremist political view. HB 103 stipulates that a committee of political appointees will use the curriculum, "The American Birthright: The Civics 16 Alliance's Model K-12 Social Studies Standards." According to the National Council for Social Studies, the 102-year-old organization representing 10,000 social studies educators and scholars which is devoted to the teaching and learning of social studies, "The American Birthright" does not align with best practices related to the development of social studies standards. The NCSS states that, "if implemented in schools, these suggested standards would have damaging and lasting effects on the civic knowledge of students and their capacity to engage in civic reasoning and deliberation. NCSS does not endorse nor support the use of these standards" ([NCSS Statement on American Birthright](#)).

(2) HB 103 is an imposition on local control, on the development of curriculum through transparent processes of subject matter experts, and is an unfunded curriculum mandate. HB 103 oversteps the bounds of the legislature, as it directly attempts to replace the current curriculum, in what can be a politicized area of the curriculum.

The curriculum that HB 103 intends to replace — the Ohio Social Studies Standards — are carefully developed over several years' time by educators who are experts in their content knowledge and teach Ohio children in classrooms. The last update was issued in 2018, replacing 2010 standards. This process is an inclusive and careful one, described on the ODE website. It began with an Ohio Department of Education survey seeking public and educator feedback between November 2016 and January 2017. An advisory committee of representatives from statewide education associations and social studies education groups then reviewed the public comments and advised the Department on which standards to update. Working groups of educators with social studies expertise reviewed the recommendations and made revisions in a draft of the standards. The Department then posted the draft revised standards for public review in summer 2017. The working groups reviewed those comments and incorporated suggestions in the draft standards. The State Board of Education adopted the revised standards in February 2018. These standards provide Ohio's educators with a set of common expectations on which to base social studies curricula. Local districts use and adapt these standards using our authority to make sound educational decisions for our communities and students. This process is transparent, inclusive of a broad range of educator input, and does not represent the actions of one party or viewpoint but rather a wide array of perspectives by those who have social studies education experience and expertise.

HB 103 would subvert the state and local mechanisms for curriculum and standards adoption, and require significant investment of time and money into new resources for curriculum.

(3) Partisan-motivated control over the K-12 social studies curriculum is dangerous in a free society. A committee consisting of appointees of the three most powerful Republicans in the state is an extremely partisan way to put together curriculum standards for American history and social studies content, especially one based in a framework specifically not endorsed by the largest association of social studies educators, the NCSS.

We strongly recommend a NO vote on this bill, based on the reasoning provided in this testimony.