

May 12, 2023

Chair Bird, Vice-Chair Fowler, Ranking Member Robinson, and Members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Duane Moore. I served as a social studies teacher for over 20 years at Hamilton High School. In that time, I have taught World History, US History, both Intro and AP Psychology, Economics, US Government, and African-American History. This includes writing curricula for many of these courses and I have been involved in writing curricula at the state level.

Today, I am testifying in opposition to House Bill 103 for a number of reasons. My dismay with this bill grows out of my years of professional practice and distinct curricular view, the implications of this bill and my understanding of Ohio's instructional policies rooted in the state constitution and Ohio revised code.

This bill is designed to create a task force, one that by the text of HB 103 is intended to disappear as soon as its task is done. Yet that task force's sole charge is the implementation of the curricular standards embodied in the *American Birthright Standards* which I oppose for many reasons.

First, I am concerned that the families, students, educators, and general citizenry of Ohio will not even have any form of recourse from the inevitable fallout of the *American Birthright Standards* since the organ intended to implement those standards will not even exist after implementation. This is a clear accountability issue.

Second, I taught African-American History for the whole of my twenty two years in the classroom. It was an elective that already existed at Hamilton High School when I arrived. I rewrote it many times during my career. Its existence and my work were possible because of a local school board choice (a point I will revisit shortly) and standards that demonstrate a respect for the knowledge and professionalism of Ohio's social studies educators.

Considering my work in teaching African-American History, I considered whether such an elective might even be able to exist under these standards. Though not structured into the grade level scope and sequence recommendations, the content could largely be cobbled together as such electives often are. However, if school boards and administrators were to abide by the pedagogical recommendations embedded in this document, the narrative needed to tell this story would not be supported. Perspective is important because no story has ever told itself.

This fact leads to my third point, that the absence of teaching skills is a detriment to historical and social thinking. The *ABR* Standards offer numerous primary sources intended to support a singular narrative of history (which they espouse in the introduction), however, the tools needed to think better about it are absent. Consider a primary source, for example the proponent testimony for HB 103 rendered last week. This contained content that, in my US Government class, I'd use to teach about rhetoric while analyzing political speeches. A few examples:

- **Glittering Generalities:** Associating *ABR* Standards with positive words like “liberty” and “understanding” as though achieving these are assured in adopting these standards.
- **False Dichotomy:** Used numerous times, mostly in asserting *ABR* Standards “neutrality” (therefore meaning current standards are not) or emphasizing the depth of content in *ABR*, implying a lack thereof in current standards when in fact they teach almost the same content.
- **Cherry-Picking:** Using NAEP scores as the most accurate valuation of Ohio students’ learning, instead of the EOC exams native to Ohio, of which social studies has the highest average scores across all disciplines for the past 7 years.

Finally, I am interested in Ohio’s freedom and independence, as are so many of you. As a home rule state, local governments and school boards are charged with making curricular choices. Were it not for these provisions, my career in the classroom would have been much different. It seems to me that to achieve the ends that proponents intend for this bill, the autonomy of school boards may be infringed.

Moreover, Ohio has sought to free itself from the work of other states as seen in ORC Section 3301.079 (A)(1)(c) stating that: “When the state board adopts or revises academic content standards in social studies, American history, American government or science...the state board shall develop standards independently and not as part of a multistate consortium.” I recognize that this provision dealt with Common Core. However, considering that *ABR* was not created in Ohio, none of the proponents who gave testimony in this chamber have worked, lived, or taught in Ohio, and that the Civics Alliance website has extensive resources dedicated to working across many states to legislate this curriculum, it seems apparent that the spirit of the aforementioned clause is violated even if the letter of the law is not.