

Written Opponent Testimony for H.B. 103

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I have been a teacher educator in the state of Ohio for almost 10 years now. I am deeply committed to preparing preservice teachers to teach social studies from Pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. I strongly oppose H.B. 103 and the development of a committee to create new k-12 social studies standards aligned with The American Birthright: The Civics Alliance's Model K-12 Social Studies Standards. I firmly believe that this proposed legislation would be detrimental to the intellectual growth and development of our students.

The American Birthright: The Civics Alliance's Model K-12 Social Studies Standards have been criticized by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) for being "narrow and biased." NCSS argues that the standards focus too much on American exceptionalism and patriotism, and not enough on critical thinking and civic engagement.

The American Birthright Standards do not provide necessary benchmarks or learning goals for citizenship education. The current Ohio Social Studies Model Curriculum includes important skills, such as analyzing primary sources and building arguments, which the proposed standards would eliminate. These standards are too focused on American exceptionalism and patriotism. They emphasize the "greatness" of America and its founding principles, but they do not provide students with a balanced view of American history and government. This can lead to students developing a false sense of superiority and a lack of critical thinking skills. They do not focus enough on critical thinking and civic engagement. The standards do not require students to learn how to think critically about the past or to engage in civic discourse. This can lead to students becoming passive citizens who are not engaged in the political process. They are not aligned with best practices in social studies education. The standards do not reflect the best practices in social studies education, which emphasize critical thinking, civic engagement, and a balanced view of history.

In addition, this is another unfunded mandate for schools. Social studies education is often underfunded. The implementation of The American Birthright standards would create significant costs to state and local communities, including changes to testing, professional development, and the purchase of new materials. Beyond the cost to districts, families who rely on AP tests to defray the cost of college would lose out, since the AP tests do not align with the standards.

As a teacher educator, I am concerned about the impact on teacher education programs. In the state of Ohio in order to be accredited through the Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation (CAEP), schools of education must show through their data that they meet the requirements for the National Council for Social Studies *Standards for the Preparation of Teacher Educators*. Standards 4 and 5 listed would be impossible to meet with the implementation of standards based on American Birthright.

Standard 4. Social Studies Learners and Learning

Candidates use knowledge of learners to plan and implement relevant and responsive pedagogy, create collaborative and interdisciplinary learning environments, and prepare learners to be informed advocates for an inclusive and equitable society.

Standard 5. Professional Responsibility and Informed Action

Candidates reflect and expand upon their social studies knowledge, inquiry skills, and civic dispositions to advance social justice and promote human rights through informed action in schools and/or communities.

If this bill is approved, Ohio's teacher preparation programs will no longer be able to meet Standards 4 and 5. This is because the bill mandates student teachers to perform tasks that are prohibited by the American Birthright Standards, specifically: 1) utilizing inquiry-based learning methods, and 2) involving students in justice and advocacy work. Consequently, the elimination and explicit prohibition of these two components from the K12 social studies curriculum will lead to Ohio no longer possessing nationally accredited teacher preparation programs. This is because these programs will be unable to train social studies educators in accordance with the CAEP standards.

In conclusion, I implore you to reject H.B. 103. It will weaken our education system with the creation of new standards that do not align with best practices in social studies education. In addition, it is another unfunded mandate that will harm schools already struggling to meet the needs of their students. Finally, it will disrupt universities' abilities to prepare teacher educators. The current Ohio Learning Standards were only adopted in 2018, they are based on current research and were designed with Ohio teachers. These are strong standards that have proven effective in the state of Ohio. Thank you for your consideration.