

May 15, 2023

Chairman Bird, Vice Chair Arthur, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the Primary and Secondary Education Committee,

My name is Katherine Wilczewski and I am writing today in opposition of House Bill 103. I have been a Social Studies teacher for 8 years, 4 of those in the state of Ohio, and was inspired by the top-notch Social Studies teachers that I had growing up. They taught me how to think for myself and critically analyze information presented to me in order to ascertain what I needed in order to be an informed voter and decision maker in the state of Ohio. I had a very dynamic experience in my Social Studies education, learning more than just the content, but I know that this has not been the case for many students across the state. Besides an inherent love for history, this is what inspired my career path. I received my Bachelors degree for 7-12 Social Studies Education here in Ohio and returned last fall after teaching in another state because I love Ohio and want students to experience the Social Studies education that I had. I recently earned my Masters degree in Education with a reading concentration in order to further support student development in critical thinking skills through reading in Social Studies, especially in the examination of primary source readings and artifacts. I took a position as a Social Studies Instructional Coach in a large Ohio district because I love working within Social Studies and helping create a landscape for learning that is better than when I was a student.

HB 103 will prevent Ohio's students from receiving that education. Notwithstanding the patently false, revisionist history that "American Birthright" seeks to instill in students, the focus of the curriculum is on content, not critical thinking skills. While content is important and is necessary in order to be successful in these skills, the curriculum seeks to eliminate learning and practice of these skills and require students to become passive recipients of their learning. We will see our students become passive observers who maintain the status quo in society if this bill passes into the House and the Senate. For the safety of our state and our country, for the future development of our nation into a country filled with hope and cooperation, this bill cannot pass out of committee. We also will no longer be able to educate Social Studies teachers in the state of Ohio because this bill will not allow national standards to be satisfied at Ohio's colleges and universities. Where will these teachers come from and how can we guarantee that they are up to the high expectations that we have for Ohio Social Studies learning?

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this dangerous bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. If you have any further questions, please feel free to reach out to me at kjwilczewski@gmail.com or (440) 228-4697.

Sincerely,

Katherine Wilczewski

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