

**Testimony for HB 171  
Submitted by: Amy Breslin**

**Testifying as Proponent**

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

My name is Amy Breslin, and I live in Fairview Park (Cuyahoga County). I am a public librarian and a parent of two students enrolled in Ohio public schools, and I am asking this committee to support HB 171 which updates the Social Studies model curriculum to better reflect the histories of all Ohioans by including the migration histories, societal contributions and experiences of a range of communities in Ohio and the United States who are not currently represented in our classrooms.

I believe that passing this bill is good for Ohio and Ohio students because an updated model curriculum would **provide rich, engaging options for teaching and learning social studies** in Ohio. It will equip teachers with activities and lessons that can support and develop respect for the students in our classrooms who come from backgrounds different than our own. Additionally, numerous studies have demonstrated how use of multicultural children's literature in classroom instruction effectively functions to promote cross-cultural understanding among U.S. school-age students. Considering the historical and future implications of globalization on business, economy, industry, innovation, and diplomatic international relations, I believe it critical for future generations to begin developing a knowledge-base of the push/pull factors that contribute to globalization, not to mention the interpersonal and critical thinking skills needed to navigate a diverse society.

Furthermore, representation and belonging in the classroom environment have a **positive impact on a student's motivation to learn and development of measurable characteristics of a successful learner as outlined by Ohio's SEL standards**. Students are more engaged when they see their communities reflected in the classroom. It's important that our students can connect to the information that they're learning in school. A 2020 study from the National Education Association shows us that students of color, in particular, who participated in courses that reflected different identities, cultures, and backgrounds had a greater sense of belonging and sense of self. A young person's sense of belonging has a significant impact on their classroom success and long-term investment in their own education. Research indicates that creating a sense of belonging through culturally competent classroom materials and modes of instruction fosters a positive school environment where students feel more confident in their abilities and accelerates academic achievement.

We fail our kids when we don't provide them with an education that truly **mirrors Ohio's current makeup as a state**. H.B. 171 can solve for that by educating students about the experiences, migration, and contributions of a range of communities that already, and in many cases, have long called Ohio home.

I respectfully urge the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee to consider my testimony and to vote yes in support of H.B. 171. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify in support of this legislation.