

Testimony for HB 171
Submitted by: Sydney Jones
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 Sydney Jones, I live in Cleveland, and I am a member of OPAWL and the Educating for Ohio's Future Coalition. As a former Ohio public school student, 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 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 was blessed and privileged to have learned from amazing educators in the Brunswick City School District. I have reached professional and personal success in my adult life in large part due to the educational foundation built by my K-12 teachers. However, as a Black and Korean Ohioan who is the daughter of an immigrant, I rarely saw my experiences reflected in the classroom or my hometown. If a bill like HB 171 had existed while I was growing up, my education would've only been enhanced. My family is truly representative of the melting pot that is Ohio and the United States, and I think my peers and I would have undoubtedly benefited from learning about the experiences and contributions of families like mine.

Additionally, I believe HB 171 is a win-win for students and educators. 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 different backgrounds than our own. Students are also 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.

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.

Thank you,
Sydney Jones