

Tuesday, February 27, 2024
Ohio Senate
Senate Education Committee
House Bill 214, proponent testimony of OSBCC

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB214.

My name is Amy Kissinger, and I present this testimony in my capacity as a member of the Executive Committee of the Ohio School Board Constitutional Coalition (OSBCC).

OSBCC exists to provide a coalition for like-minded school board members, educational professionals and parent groups to pursue a 'Back to the Basics' educational agenda and a focus on graduating citizens capable of self-governance. We thank bill sponsor Representative Adam Holmes for hearing the many concerns of parents and school board members in Ohio who agree with this goal.

As Representative Holmes testified when he introduced this bill, it is true that many in Ohio's schools have experienced 'negative consequences for expressing certain political perspectives or failing to conform to specific ideological viewpoints' in the classroom. This is wholly unacceptable, especially in America where we value and defend individual freedom and equality under the law.

Passage of this bill into law would support several of the fundamental values of OSBCC:

- Recognize respectful debate is the foundation for innovation and consensus building.
- Graduate individuals who are capable of self-governance, understand personal responsibility and respect the United States of America.
- Uphold transparency, honesty, trust, freedom, choice, teamwork, civility, and tolerance.

We urge your support of HB214 in order to provide specific protection for free speech rights for public school employees, students and job applicants, and to also begin the important work of restoring the trust of parents and the community in our public schools.