

**Kaylee Booth**

**AYA History Major/Senior at Marietta College**

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Kaylee Booth, and I am an adolescent/young adult history major. I am preparing to start my senior year internship this fall at Marietta College.

It is made evidently clear by you all being members of this board and our attendance here today that we all care about the same thing, educating the next generation in the most responsible way possible.

I am very proud of my major and the aspirations I have as a future educator. However, when I share these aspirations with friends, family, and anybody that is interested, the conversation typically goes as follows:

They say, "What is your major?" and I proudly respond "AYA History." They say, "What does that mean?" I say, "I want to teach history at the high school level." Nine times out of ten I am met with either "Eww" or "Why would you do that, I'd rather do preschool and play with the little kids."

Every educator goes into teaching for a specific reason. For example, I was guided into education by a wonderful teacher I had in my small rural high school. I first had him as a freshman, lost in every way possible. My junior year of high school I endured a tragic incident that changed the trajectory of my life. In 2018 my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer and my academic career fell apart. I was struggling to keep up with my work because of all the newfound responsibilities I had at home.

I confided in this teacher because he knew something was wrong when I mixed up Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt on an exam. I told him everything I had going on in my life and that I just did not care about anything anymore. He sat down with me every day for weeks and helped me navigate what I was going through. I remember one specific quote he said to me that day, "This is why I teach history, so much can be learned from the past, not just in foreign relations or cycles of policy reform, but in yourself and the world around you."

He taught history in a way I had never experienced before. He taught history and life concurrently. He used propaganda posters from WWII to explain social media and how everything might look great on the internet, but from the outside you have no idea. He used the Cold War to ease our minds about applying to colleges and scholarships, because we were so anxious about a missile or rejection letter that probably was never going to come.

I am telling you all this to say high school teachers and elementary teachers have very different reasons for doing what they do. I want to teach history so I can teach life lessons concurrently

like Mr. B did. My friend in early education wants to teach first grade so she can see the spark a child gets when they read a word on their own for the first time. Most importantly are the middle school teachers.

Middle school teachers are superheroes. They handle the most confusing time in a child's life. Puberty chemically alters the brain and if you think back to your own middle school days, I'm sure you have some memories you are not proud of. I'm also sure many of those memories happened in school or with friends you went to school with.

These teachers deal with the embarrassing moments, the hormonal rages, and bodily changes these kids are going through by choice. Middle school is arguably the toughest years for most students, and having teachers who specifically want to teach it is special.

By eliminating the grades 4-9 grade band, we took away the flexibility of these superheroes. They currently will have to choose if they want to teach little kids how to read or handle the most difficult adult situations with a junior.

The grade bands tailor our teaching styles and what we prepare for in the classroom. I am not equipped with the tools to teach 6<sup>th</sup> grade. If I was flexed to a 6<sup>th</sup> grade classroom, I would have a hard time believing that I am still able to do what I set out to do when my heart pulled me to education.

To put 4-9 splitting into K-5 and 6-12 in perspective, It is the same as knowing you want to be in government because you want to change education and economic opportunity, and this is the place to do it. Once you get elected you target your passion areas just to be told you have to choose one or the other.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for your attention. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.