

Testimony on House Bill 155
Linda Harvey, Mission America

Thank you for allowing me to testify in support of House Bill 155.

In July 2020, the Ohio State Board of Education passed a resolution condemning “white supremacy culture” and “hate speech” and encouraging top-to-bottom audits of Ohio schools for “inequity” and “implicit bias.”

Public uproar followed and several meetings later, the board chair prohibited any further public comments on the CRT issue after a complaint from one of the board members. This ban caused even more public outcry.

In 2021, the State Board rescinded that resolution after much public outrage and replaced it with one entitled, “Resolution to Promote Academic Excellence in K-12 Education for Each Ohio Student Without Prejudice or Respect to Race, Ethnicity or Creed.” This new resolution reflects a foundation of American civic principles, and yet we still have many schools in Ohio that started down the road of CRT, now repositioned as “DEI,” and still don’t get why it’s unjust and unfair, why it’s not diverse and not equitable.

I am president of Mission America and I also serve on the board of Protect Ohio Children and that organization has as one of its missions to expose critical race theory and its newer name, DEI, and show parents why these agendas are unjust for students and families, and seriously undermine the school culture.

POC receives anonymous tips from the community members—parents, teachers and others—about what’s happening in the schools. Why do we need a bill like House Bill 155 to prohibit DEI in schools? Because it’s everywhere in Ohio and it’s doing a lot of harm.

Based on anonymous evidence provided to [Protect Ohio Children](#), we have information about 69 school districts in Ohio with overt CRT /DEI lessons, programs or policies since 2020. Many of these are part of a “social emotional learning” framework. Most of these also promote “LGBTQ” behaviors and identities to students.

And of course, these are just the reports POC has received. There is no doubt this is just the tip of the iceberg.

Here are just a few examples.

One disturbing example of CRT/DEI indoctrination comes from Bay Village, a Cleveland suburb. School consultants were hired from a group called the Bay Village Anti-Racism Network. One consultant who expressed support for the radical group Black Lives Matter and spent college years in Communist China was nevertheless given broad duties within Bay Village schools, including conducting surveys about school culture and climate.

Bay Village Schools adopted an “equity commitment” with militant [language from the mission of Black Lives Matter](#). Bay Village schools pledged to “disrupt systemic inequities and eliminate disparities...”

This doesn’t sound like inclusion—this sounds like revolution.

[Fairfield City Schools](#) has as a “Pillar 1” objective, to “Recruit, hire and retain teachers of color.” Not hire the most qualified, but to judge someone as far as employment based on the color of his/her skin.

The [Bedford school system](#) has 3 “equity and inclusion” staff, 1 SEL coordinator, 6 SEL interventionists, 11 school counselors, 4 school psychologists, 4 school social workers, 2 mental health therapists.

Yet the Ohio School Report Card shows [Bedford Schools](#) have less than 44% of students achieving 3rd grade proficiency in reading, yet 100% of students were promoted to fourth grade. Some priorities seem very misplaced here.

[Cleveland Metropolitan](#) school system is named as a key district for social emotional learning, touting its significant “equity” focus and also that SEL “[improves academic performance](#).” But Cleveland Schools have a very low [third grade reading proficiency rate](#)—35.8%.

[Dayton City Schools](#) adopted a resolution on DEI in 2021 that asserts that there are “racial inequities in all facets of life in the United States, and these racial inequities continue to the present day...” Also the resolution affirmed a “rejection” of “meritocracy” and that “the social construction of race and institutionalized racism perpetuate a racial caste system.”

Dayton’s school board recently voted to refuse to sign a letter from the Trump administration committing to no discrimination through DEI.

And many parents have been concerned about the display of BLM flags in classrooms. At Kings Local schools, parents cited two classrooms with BLM flags and a Kings’ parent was outraged about lessons she called “anti-Christian, anti-American, and racist.”

[Mason City School District’s](#) “Elementary Diversity/Equity Team” provided the book *Julian is a Mermaid* about transgender issues to all Mason 3rd grade classes.

Many school systems paid sketchy consultants for “equity audits” and DEI work. The [Diversity Center of NE Ohio](#) was hired by Parma, Bedford, Painesville, Brunswick, Cleveland Metro, and Elyria.

The [Solon City Schools](#) high school principal sent a letter to homes in 2020 announcing beginning of big DEI push, that said, “...all lives cannot matter until black lives start mattering.” This administrator is woefully out of touch with prevailing American public opinion that of course, black lives matter because all lives matter. What should not matter is

any large movement that seems determined to stir up divisions and operate like scam-artists. And schools should not allow themselves to be manipulated by such movements.

Many schools are proudly weaving “LGBTQ” issues into a DEI focus, as if these are inborn, neutral traits. [Mariemont Schools](#) launched a “Global and Cultural Perspectives” program which received many parent complaints. The radical reading list for all ages covered both DEI and “LGBTQ” issues. “Safe zone” stickers from the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network appeared on most classrooms in all four schools.

There are many more details on the [Protect Ohio Children](#) individual school district listings. And even if a school system is not listed, it does not mean that the district is not implementing objectionable DEI programs. It only means that nothing as yet has been reported to POC.

It is possible that some of these reports have prompted schools to end these wasteful and misleading programs. If so, that should be reported to tips@protectohiochildren.net.

Thank you for allowing my testimony. I ask the committee members to vote yes on House Bill 155.