

Proponent Written Statement for Ohio House Bill 155:

Chairman Fowler-Aurthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and Members of the House Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 155. My name is Tom Hach, and I am in my fourth term as a school board member currently serving on the Education Service Center of the Western Reserve Governance Board. I am writing this on my own behalf, and I am not representing the board on which I serve.

I whole-heartedly support House Bill 155, introduced in the 136th Ohio General Assembly, which takes a critical and necessary step to ensure Ohio's K-12 public schools prioritize academic excellence and unity over divisive ideological agendas. By prohibiting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training and programs that promote specified controversial concepts, HB 155 protects students, educators, and families from courses of study and practices which undermine critical thinking, social harmony and foster division. The passage of HB 155 will foster a rebirth of merit within our schools, and I urge your swift passage of this critical legislation.

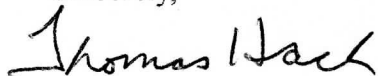
This legislation empowers parents and educators, and will go a long way in restoring the public's trust in Ohio's education system. By eliminating DEI content, HB 155 ensures schools prioritize core academic subjects—math, science, reading, and history—are taught in a manner that encourages objective analysis rather than strict ideological conformity. This focus aligns with the desires of Ohio families who want their children educated in environments free from polarizing agendas, preparing them for success in a diverse world through unity, merit and mutual respect.

HB 155 addresses growing concerns among Ohio parents and communities about the inclusion of DEI content that promotes concepts such as collective guilt, racial superiority, or discrimination based on race, sex, or other characteristics – concepts which are all antithetical to the founding principles of our state and our nations. The bill prohibits public schools from requiring students or staff to participate in training, programs, or activities that endorse these divisive ideas, ensuring that education remains focused on fostering individual merit, critical thinking, and shared values. It also prevents schools from compelling agreement with these concepts as a condition of academic or professional standing, safeguarding free thought and expression.

Opponents may argue that HB 155 limits discussions of diversity or inclusion. However, the bill does not prevent teaching historical facts or fostering respectful dialogue; it simply prohibits mandating adherence to specific ideological viewpoints. By doing so, it protects students and educators from being coerced into endorsing beliefs that may conflict with their values or reason. Florida has already implemented similar measures, while Texas is considering doing the same.

HB 155 is a commonsense reform that reaffirms Ohio's commitment to an education system that unites rather than divides. It ensures our K-12 schools are places where students learn to think critically, value individual worth, and build a shared future. I respectfully urge the 136th General Assembly to pass HB 155, standing with Ohio families and educators in prioritizing education over ideology.

Sincerely,



Thomas Hach