

Good afternoon,

My name is Heather Crum and I am the Ohio Legislative Chair of Moms for Liberty. I would like to thank Chair Fowler-Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, and all other members of this committee for the opportunity to address you today.

I am here in support of House Bill 155. Parents have witnessed schools failing our children as the focus on core academics have taken a back seat to woke ideology. The pandemic of 2020 was truly a blessing which opened the eyes of parents, to what was happening inside of our kids classrooms. DEI has invaded the core of our schools, taking the focus away from educating America's students and preparing them for a better future. Diversity, equity and inclusion are now interwoven into every subject lesson in our schools. The importance of House Bill 155 could not be more evident.

America's educational system has been hijacked by progressives who have successfully aided in the demise of our schools. DEI curricula pushes political indoctrination over educational basics and is a direct response to the civic and social justice movements and has absolutely no place in classrooms. Schools are graduating political activists instead of prepared young adults ready for meaningful work, and self sufficient lives.

DEI refers to a broad range of initiatives and policies aimed at creating a more “inclusive” and “equitable” environment. It sounds all warm and fuzzy and quite benign in nature but that is not the reality of this woke indoctrination. This ideology focuses on all aspects of human difference, focusing excessively on racial and gender groups at the expense of individual merit and is a tool for political agendas.

Schools today focus on teaching empathy, gender ideology and understanding emotions. Students are taught there are 85 different genders, they can choose to be a boy on Monday and a girl on Thursday, that mental illness is not only supported, but promoted. Students are taught to be disempowered victims who are no longer held accountable for their actions. Girls are taught to take a back seat to boys pretending to be girls, while their sports and private spaces are invaded by biological males. The American flag has been replaced by pride flags as students are taught to hate our country. Such harmful indoctrination is detrimental to our children and must end.

Parents have the fundamental right to direct the upbringing of our children. This includes education, religion, medical, morals and values. These are inherent God given rights, not given to us by the Government. It is not the schools place to teach such lessons to our children. I ask you by whose standards are these topics being taught when it is a parents role to instill morals and values into our children. We at Moms for Liberty stand to protect parental rights in

classrooms and hold the line advocating that our parental right do not stop at the classroom door.

We have witnessed the results of this destructive agenda across this great state. The average student in Ohio receives less than 40 minutes of educational instruction daily. All the while students spend an average of seven hours a day in school. Currently 31% of fourth graders and 30% of eighth graders are proficient in reading. One in three eighth graders are functionally illiterate. Let that sink in. Only 28% of eighth graders are considered proficient in math. Achieving proficiency is crucial for setting students up for success. Teaching what will always matter: reading, history, math and critical thinking should be our focus. The foundational things that made and still make this country a beacon of hope for people around the world.

In Ohio, roughly 2/3 of property tax revenue is dedicated to funding public schools. Public tax dollars, our tax dollars should never be used for DEI offices in k-12 schools, where they are becoming as common as they are in higher education. The return on our investments are less than unacceptable. Would you accept those same rates of return from your financial planner? Probably not.

It is imperative that House Bill 155 receives your support. Today's students are the future generation of this great state and nation. It is not only our job, but our duty to ensure they receive a quality education. Supporting House Bill 155 will ensure we protect the educational system for Ohio's youth.

Thank you.

Heather C. Crum

