

To Education Committee Chair Sarah Fowler Arthur and honorable members of the Ohio House Education Committee:

I am testifying as an opponent to HB 486, Enact the Charlie Kirk American Heritage Act. This bill is an unnecessary waste of the Committee's time. In Representative Gary Click's written testimony on October 7th he made the point that educators are free to teach all sides of history lessons but don't realize they have that right. Rep. Click states with HB 486 "We are simply affirming for them the law as it already exists."

The law that exists is the First Amendment of the US Constitution. Unfortunately we live in times where the rights granted in the Constitution are being challenged and threatened, so it is not surprising that educators may be hesitant to speak freely about history.

If teachers in Ohio are worried about teaching about the Pilgrims traveling to the new world to escape religious persecution, or why Thomas Jefferson purposely did not use any religious wording in the Declaration of Independence, or how Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. used the Gospel to fight for civil rights and not judge a man or woman on the color of their skin, then efforts should be made to make it clear that they can talk about all facts in history lessons.

But, the real purpose of HB 486 is not to support freedom of speech but to incorporate only Christian teachings in all US history lessons. Thomas Jefferson believed freedom of religion meant freedom from being forced to practice one specific faith and also meant the freedom to not be religious.

This bill, named for a man who spoke against people based on the color of their skin, against equality for women, and fueled the fears currently in this country about teaching accurate history and the truth (even when the history is not pleasant) should not be passed.

Thank you for your time.

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