

Dear Chair Fowler Arthur, Vice-Chair Odioso, and Ranking Member Brennan, and Members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee,

As a former middle and high school teacher in Florida [1984-2003], professor in the Department of Teacher Education in the Patton College of Education at Ohio University [2003-2025] and current Southeast Representative [Region 4] on the Board of the Ohio Council for Social Studies (OCSS), I strongly oppose HB 486. As stated in its Position Statement, OCSS supports robust, constitutionally sound instruction *about* religion's roles in history. As a former public school teacher and teacher educator for 41 years I strongly support teaching *about* religion such that students may develop an understanding the basic teachings of the major world religions. In contrast, HB 486 mandates a favorable, state-selected narrative and prescribes exemplar topics in statute. This approach undermines instructional neutrality, academic freedom, local control, and inclusive learning environments.

I urge you take note of OCSS' Position Statement against House Bill 486 *Enact the Charlie Kirk American Heritage Act* and oppose HB 486. As clearly stated by OCSS in its Position Statement:

- HB 486 Is Redundant to Existing Ohio Learning Standards (OLS)
- Undermines Ohio's Curriculum Development Process
- Destabilizes Instructional Coherence and Sequencing
- Promotes a Narrow Religious Narrative
- Contradicts Ohio's Standards and Best Pedagogy

I strongly support the Conclusion in OCSS's statement and urge you to do likewise: By promoting a narrow, state-sanctioned view of religion in American history, HB 486 undermines the quality and reliability of Ohio's model curriculum, destabilizes instruction, and puts teachers and students at risk of legal and academic harm. Our students deserve the best education Ohio can provide: one that embraces complexity, fosters inquiry, and prepares them to participate fully in a diverse democracy.

Respectfully,

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