

Chairwoman Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, and Ranking Member Brennan,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Mackenzie Doyle and I am the Justice Promoter for the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati. I am a Catholic who is opposed to HB 486.

I am concerned about this bill for a couple of reasons. Firstly, in the list of examples that you have claimed as “historical accounts” are not accurate historical instruction, especially in regards to the pilgrims’ relationship with Native Americans (see points 4 and 5 under Sec. 3320.10 A).

In regards to the “First Thanksgiving,” numerous sources have debunked that narrative of the First Thanksgiving originating with the celebration of Thanksgiving between a Native tribe, the Wampanoag, and the pilgrims in 1621. More accurately, the modern celebration of Thanksgiving began in 1863 with President Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War. While numerous American communities and European colonists had celebrated days of Thanksgiving prior to 1863, they were not uniform or associated with one specific day. Abraham Lincoln established the holiday as a way to improve relations between the warring northern and southern states as well as between the US and tribal nations. The myth of friendly association of pilgrims and Native peoples was largely an “invention of the 19th and early 20th centuries.” It could be accurate to say that days of Thanksgiving had Christian roots, but there were also as noted in the article from the Potawatomi website, Native peoples also celebrated something similar as well.

- See here:  
<https://www.potawatomi.org/blog/2020/11/25/the-true-dark-history-of-thanksgiving/>
- <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/thanksgiving-massacre-pequot-tribe/>
- <https://time.com/6123111/first-thanksgiving-story-covers-up-real-violence/>

In regards to point 4, the treaty with the Native Americans that was signed and upheld by the pilgrims is quite vague. What treaty was this? What does this one treaty have to do with Christianity? Also what about all the unequal treaties that followed that were frequently broken over and over again by the US government? It gives a false impression that the pilgrims and later Americans upheld treaties when they in reality did not. It also fails to note how native populations were decimated by disease from the European colonists’ arrival and how they continued to fight and slaughter Native peoples, including women and children.

- <https://www.history.com/articles/wampanoag-pilgrim-peace-treaty-thanksgiving>
- <https://www.capecodtimes.com/in-depth/news/2020/11/24/pilgrims-sought-religious-freedom-then-denied-wampanoag/6354843002/>

Lastly, my other concern is that as a Christian myself, that this presents students with only one half of the story. For instance, it ignores how Christianity was used to uphold slavery. I would recommend reading *The Color of Compromise* by Jemar Tisby for that story. It ignores how churches did nothing to stop lynching or Jim Crow. I would recommend reading *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* by James Cone for more information. Thus, I want my children to learn how Christianity and other faiths as well have been both positive and negative forces in the United States and to learn the complex history that gets us to today. I do not want a sugar coated, one

side of the story because that will just continue to leave children uneducated and unable to have critical thinking about their faith institutions.

Thank you for allowing me to testify,

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