

Chair Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Brennan, and members of the Ohio Education Committee; thank you for allowing me to provide proponent testimony for HB 486.

My name is Hannah Teets and I am a lifelong resident of Ohio. I graduated from a public high school in Cleveland and recently finished graduate school. But most importantly, I am a Christian whose family has called this country home since 1760.

**I support HB 486 because it asserts the truth: Christianity laid the moral foundation that our nation was founded upon.**

Those who oppose HB 486 and hide behind the phrase “separation of church and state” fail to acknowledge the irrefutable truth that Christianity shaped America.<sup>2,5</sup>From the first colonial settlements to the founding of our republic, Christian principles shaped the framework of our country.<sup>2</sup>For example, the Declaration of Independence declares God as our Creator who endows humans with unalienable rights, a truth that anchors our in human dignity, equality, and freedom. Even our national symbols reflect this heritage.<sup>3</sup>The Liberty Bell bears an inscription from biblical scripture which reads, “Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof (Leviticus 25:10).” Our understanding of liberty itself was biblical. To deny Christianity’s influence on America is to deny history and the truth itself.

John Adams even asserted, “Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

<sup>1</sup>In 2024, Charlie Kirk expanded on this quote by saying, “The body politic of America was so Christian and so Protestant that our formal structure of government was built for the people that believed in Christ our Lord. One of the reasons we are living through a constitutional crisis is that we no longer have a Christian nation, but we have a Christian form of government and they are incompatible. You cannot have liberty if you do not have a Christian population.”

America was founded on freedom of religion, not freedom from religion. Our rights come from God, not the government. Separation of church and state was meant to protect the church from the state—not the state from the church. The claim HB 486 violates church-state separation is a gross misrepresentation of both the law and intent of this bill.

Opponents also claim HB 486 is unnecessary because teachers *can* already teach about Christianity’s influence. But this claim ignores a harsh reality that educators avoid mentioning Christian contributions out of fear of backlash, controversy, or accusations of bias. On the other hand, some harbor hostility toward Christianity itself. HB 486 eases that fear. It gives educators the clarity and confidence to teach the truth without hesitation.

Dismissing the historical reality is a disservice to students by leaving them with an incomplete and distorted understanding of our history. To erase or diminish the truth is not neutrality, it’s revisionism. The historical record speaks for itself. Some of America’s earliest schools and universities, including many in Ohio, were founded by Christians with a mission to promote literacy, moral instruction and civic virtue.

Yet during my years in Ohio public schools, Christianity was seldom mentioned, and when it was, it was too often portrayed negatively. Meanwhile, other faiths and cultures were taught with enthusiasm and respect. We frequently took field trips to the Jewish Heritage Museum, celebrated Chinese New Year,

Diwali and Ramadan. These valuable experiences showed me that schools can and do teach religion in a historical context. But if every faith except Christianity is treated with respect, “inclusion” becomes exclusion. HB 486 is about restoring balance, honesty and fairness to the classroom.

The distorted picture of Christianity being taught in schools today has done more than misinform; it has created an environment where Christian students feel unwelcome, ridiculed, and even unsafe. I’ve experienced and seen it firsthand. My siblings, my friends, and I have all been told that Christians are the “bad guys,” responsible for history’s wrongs and society’s pain. This narrative distorts the truth, fosters the “us vs. them” mentality, and breeds division in schools. Restoring the truthful narrative about Christianity in schools is the first step to ending the growing hostility towards Christians today. When truth is replaced with caricature, ignorance becomes prejudice.

**This is not about promoting religion. It is about restoring truth, fairness and historical integrity in Ohio’s classrooms. I strongly urge this Committee to stand for truth and vote in favor of HB 486.**

**Thank you to members of the Committee for your time and attention to this important issue.**

#### References

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4. “Constitution of the State of Ohio (1851).” *Rutgers Law Library*, <https://njlaw.rutgers.edu/cgi-bin/constitution.cgi?funct=1&document=OH008&state=OH&document=OH008&page=0010&zoom=120>.
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6. Parker, Kim, Joanna Williams, and David Masci. “Views of How Much Discrimination Muslims, Jews, Evangelicals and Atheists Face.” *Pew Research Center*, 20 May 2025, <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2025/05/20/views-of-how-much-discrimination-muslims-jews-evangelicals-and-atheists-face/>.
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