

Good Afternoon. 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 Phineas Kelly, a freshman student at the University of Dayton and I am very thankful for the opportunity to testify today. I am here in support of House Bill 486 and I thank Representatives Click and Dovilla for introducing this vital legislation. One of the greatest lies ever told is that education must be neutral, or even that it is possible for it to be neutral. There is no such thing as a neutral person, a neutral opinion, or a neutral “fact.” Morality is written on the human heart and bleeds through every action. Or, as author T.S. Eliot put it: “No education is ever neutral, for it always implies a standard of what is worth knowing.” Today, we face a perilous predicament: for far too long education has not been instilled in its proper form. Modern educators treat students as though they are nothing more than future workers; toy soldiers that need to be wound up so that they may march in proper form, never stepping out of line or thinking freely. The students of today are treated like piggy banks or empty vessels with which we can stuff knowledge into. This is no way to make good citizens. The word education is derived from *educere*, Latin for to lead forth or draw out, not to stuff in. The great Aristotle says education is to cultivate virtue and to orient the soul towards objective good. Such a task cannot be impartial. Every act of teaching presupposes a vision of the good, the true, and the beautiful. To claim neutrality is to smuggle in a different moral order under the guise of impartiality. So then, what moral standard must education be based upon? There is, of course, an objective standard that we can not only look back upon to see the successes of but to also apply going forward with sincerity and with certainty. This framework is clearly and evidently the Christian worldview. The American experiment presupposes moral realism, personal responsibility, and inherent human dignity, all of which are uniquely and originally Christian ideas. Remove Christian ethics, and liberty collapses into license, equality into envy, and law into power. But don’t take it from me, take it from Framers John Adams, who said “Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious People. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.” and George Washington, who in his final address to the nation preached “Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion and morality are indispensable supports.” America’s moral and political foundations were not born from secular abstraction, but from the ethical soil of Christianity. The ideas that all men are created equal, that rights are inherent and not granted by the state, and that liberty must be ordered by virtue, all flow directly from the Christian vision of man as made in the image of God. These truths are self-evident ones, but they are not self-protected. It is up to us, as citizens and legislators, to not let these virtues be cast aside in favor of abstract frankensteinian moral relativism, as so often promoted by the other side of the issue. I chose to go to college knowing the rich heritage of these ideas. I desired and expected to be a student of exhaustive comprehensive studies of morality, virtue, politics, and history. Instead, I am fed through the conveyor belt of general education classes and moral relativism installed by some bureaucrat decades ago. Opponents like the ACLU want you to believe that this bill violates some standard of neutrality. Such a standard does not exist. If we don’t instill proper values in our students, groups like that will intimidate legislators into allowing someone else to install something improper. The principal purpose of the legislator is to make virtuous citizens, and I am thus calling on Ohio legislators to guarantee that myself, my children, their children, my friends, neighbors, peers, and enemies alike can enjoy the fruits of Christian truth born through proper education. The late great Charlie Kirk laid down his life for nothing less than the words I am imparting to you today. He knew the stakes, there are those who relish in the destruction of righteousness, who dance and spit on the graves of those who realized these virtues into the great nation we have today. They do it for no reason other than that they scoff at order and take joy in chaos. They are standing on the shoulders of giants and yet think they are flying. House Bill 486 encourages the idea that education can once again form the mind and the conscience, not merely the résumé. I will leave you with this quote from Aristotle in his famous work *Politics*: “The lawgiver should direct his attention above all to the education of youth; for the neglect of education does harm to the constitution.” I urge your support for this bill. Charlie Kirk sacrificed his life in defense of these ideas. The least we could do is recognize his sacrifice. Thank you for your time and your service.