

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 on House Bill 486.

I am Jacob Patrick. I am 21 years old. I have spent the last 20 years of my life living in Ohio and 12 of those years were spent attending the public school system. I am now enrolled at the University of Dayton as a first-generation college student. It is also here at the University of Dayton I became a first generation Catholic after being raised in no religion.

There is a widespread belief among many Americans today that the United States is a godless society. It is often taught that our government and laws were founded entirely on the idea of a strict separation of church and state. However, this interpretation is both misleading and incomplete. The truth is that faith and moral principles rooted in religion have always played an essential role in shaping our nation's identity and governance.

The most convincing argument raised against this bill is that it infringes on the neutrality of education in classrooms. If we are going to discuss neutrality in the classroom, then we must be willing to present the facts, cold, hard facts. Objective reality, not ideology, should guide what is taught to our students. The neutral and factual truth of our country's history is that we are a nation founded by Christians, for a Christian people.

Our Founding Father John Adams expressed this clearly in his 1798 letter to the Massachusetts Militia: *"We have no Government armed with Power capable of contending with human Passions unbridled by morality and Religion. Avarice, Ambition, Revenge or Gallantry, would break the strongest Cords of our Constitution as a Whale goes through a Net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious People. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."* This is not an isolated sentiment. Nine of the original thirteen colonies required either a religious test or a declaration of Christian faith before one could hold public office. The 1776 Constitution of Delaware, for instance, required every officeholder to affirm: *"I, A.B., do profess faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, and in the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed forevermore; and I do acknowledge the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by divine inspiration."* Though such requirements are no longer enforced, they serve as historical testimony to our founders and their deep conviction that faith and morality are inseparable from good governance. Religion has long provided the moral compass necessary for justice and virtue to prevail.

To deny educators the opportunity to discuss how Christianity has positively influenced our nation's history would be to ignore a vital part of our heritage. Recognizing this influence is not an act of exclusion, but one of honesty, acknowledging the moral and spiritual framework that helped shape the United States into the nation it is today.

Thank you, Chair Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Brennan, and members of the Committee, for your time and thoughtful consideration of this important matter.

### **Source Cited**

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