

Crystal Traini: HB 486 Teacher Testimony

(Bracketed, gray sections will not be read, for time)

Introduction:

Chairwoman Fowler, Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Brennan, and members of the House Education Committee: Thank you for service to education and our state's children.

My name is Crystal Traini. [I knew in 8th grade—the age of some of my oldest students today—that I wanted to be a teacher of music and history. Teaching has always been my passion.] I began my public school career, teaching in rural Appalachia in the 1990s, and later earned a Master's in Education, with top honors, from Boston University.

Our combined experiences with public education as students and educators—*particularly* in history, made us hesitate to place our own children in public schools. Though I loved the classroom and was successful in my career, we sacrificed half of our family income to homeschool classically, giving them a strong foundation in Truth through the best practices in history, literature, and primary sources. Today, I teach general music with history K-8, at a private, classical school.

[History as the Hub of Education:

History is the central hub of education. (*pause*) Think of education as a wagon wheel—history is the hub, and all other subjects—STEM, music, the arts—are the spokes. Every subject, when taught fully, *includes* history. Yet, history is too often taught incompletely, and I don't believe it is an accident.]

The Fear Among Teachers:

I want to speak honestly about something I hear constantly from fellow teachers: fear.

Many teachers hesitate to bring up the Christian roots of our country, afraid to speak about the faith that shaped our findings. Why? Fear of backlash—from administrators, unions, or parents. Teachers often say privately, "I'm not allowed to teach "that.""

This fear creates silence. The result: students learn history without context, faith, or hope.

An example of my own hesitation includes:

The decision to sing the fourth verse of the National Anthem:

O thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand

Between their loved home and the war's desolation!

Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the Heav'n rescued land

Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation.

Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,

And this be our motto: "In God is our trust."

[2.) Teaching the Marine's Hymn: explaining the context of the phrase: "*from the shores to Tripoli.*"

In the 1780s, the U.S. faced threats from the Barbary States, including Tripoli, whose leaders claimed it was their religious duty to wage war on nations that did not pay tribute.

Quote from Jefferson and Adams to John Jay (Primary source March 28, 1786):

"The Ambassador answered us that it was founded on the Laws of their Prophet ... that all nations who should not have acknowledged their authority were sinners, that it was their right and duty to make war upon them wherever they could be found, & to make slaves of all they could take as Prisoners, and that every Musselman who should be slain in battle was sure to go to Paradise."

Observed history lessons omit that the Barbary pirates were Islamic and almost all exclude the previous quote—a crucial detail. Would teachers be allowed to share this primary source today? Is the takeaway from this omission truthful? Of course not.]

Redundancy:

We heard many times last week that the bill is redundant and that these rights already exist. But what teacher would not hesitate to share the fourth verse of *our* National Anthem after hearing the ACLU speak last week? This committee was told that the ACLU typically does not sue the teacher—they sue the school district. That's even more frightening of a prospect to a teacher who loves their district!

Teachers often do not know what they are legally allowed to teach. Being told to ask a union or administration often reinforces fear or bias. This is exactly why we need the Charlie Kirk Heritage Act.

The dot Lesson:

In class, I hold up a clean white sheet with a small dot usually to illustrate how an audience views flaws in a music performance.

I ask students, “What do you see?” Almost every hand goes up: “A dot.” I ask again, “What else do you see?” They hesitate. “Nothing... just the dot.”

Then I ask: how does this tiny flaw draw all attention, when 99.9% of the page is white?

This is how history is often taught. We focus on mistakes, flaws...the dots while ignoring the overarching Truth, goodness, and beauty that define the greater story.

[How History is Deconstructed – Why Students Misunderstand Their Country and Christianity: Students often grow up misunderstanding their nation, viewing Christianity negatively—and it is not accidental.]

Decades of classroom practices and curricular decisions have created this outcome. Here's how it happens:

- Reframing History: Students are guided to view the past through a modern lens of understanding. ~~Slavery is often simplified to “founders were evil,” ignoring global context and the moral struggles of the entire world at the time.~~ Positive influences of Christianity are minimized because of the secular worldview of the teacher.
- Selective Emphasis: Textbooks highlight flaws while downplaying accomplishments, virtues, and faith-driven actions. Students are trained to focus on the “dot” rather than the full page of truth.
- Omissions: Key details are left out or framed through progressive commentary, instead of focusing mostly on reading primary source material.
- Implicit Bias in Education: Even well-meaning teachers unintentionally contribute to this perspective through biased textbooks, poor education, or fear of backlash.

- That bias, which we *all* have, is reinforced *exclusively* in teacher colleges: In my personal experience at Boston University, one of the top teacher training Universities in America, we were assigned three *standard* texts to study and were expected to reproduce their content without analysis or critical engagement. *All three* are Marxist education theorists.

[1) Paulo Friere *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970)

2) Pierre Bourdieu: *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (1970)

3) Michael Apple: *Ideology and Curriculum* (1979; 4th ed. 2014)]

The result: students leave school with shame about their country, misunderstanding historical decisions, skepticism or hostility—toward Christianity. They *never* hear exciting stories of the courage of the Black-Robe Regiment or Gabriel Muhlenberg that helped garner their own freedoms, or the faith-driven leadership that shaped our nation.

{Truth, Courage, and Faith:

As educators, we are tasked with presenting objective truth, but after hearing last week's opposition, it is clear that objective Truth no longer matters in Social Studies. The positive Christian fabric that formed this country is missing from public classrooms. Shying away from truth denies students the chance to learn moral courage and virtues already absent today in public schools..

Students need stories of Christian courage, triumph over evil, and our nation's Christian legacy in context.] Any Nation whose citizenry taught to hate its Christian-foundings *will not stand*—today's Europe shows this clearly. Teaching Truth requires courage. Students deserve teachers willing to take that step.

Closing:

We need this legislation to REITERATE and empower teachers to teach history honestly, and without fear. Students deserve to learn about Christian influences, moral courage, and the decisions that shaped our nation. They deserve absolute Truth, in context, presented faithfully. I am most humbly honored to stand in support of the Charlie Kirk Heritage Act. Thank you for your time. I stand open for questions.

Greeting 1) addresses

2) Thank you for your service to students and our state

Introduction: My name is Crystal Traini. I knew in 8th grade at the age of my oldest students today that I wanted to be a teacher of music or history. Teaching is my passion and I started my career in public school in Appalachia Ohio until we started our family. I have a Bachelors from capital U and a Masters degree in education from BU. We have been a public school education family for _____ years. When it was the plan to return to publi school teaching,

It was our own experiences from our own public education background through teaching, and the failure of history education and my fears of placing my own 2 children in public school due mostly to history education failures we had seen that led to me sacrificing half of our family's single educator income to homeschool Classically through high school so we could give them so much more. No matter the opportunity cost, we just could not play Russian roulette with their education. We could not depend that any given year they would be taught by someone who hated the foundings of our great Nation.

Today I teach general music, including history K-8 in a non govt' Hillsdale college curriculum school.

History:

I think it is important to understand that we believe in a great education,

If we view classroom education as a wagon wheel

History is the central hub of that wheel. It is the key subject emcompassing all other branches (STEM subjects, music, the arts...)

Which are the spokes that branch off of that main hub. History is the one subject taught in all branches. It is intrinsically cross curricular in ature

Fear:

The Fear Among Teachers

I want to speak honestly about something I hear constantly from fellow teachers and have felt myself: **fear**.

We are scared.

WE know many teachers and over the decades, we often hear experiences of teachers who hesitated bring up the christian roots of our country.

Scared to speak openly about the role that faith played in the lives of our founders.

Scared to mention that the people who shaped our nation drew strength from prayer, Scripture, and divine providence.

Why? Because many teachers fear backlash—from administrators, from unions, or even from parents who have been taught that acknowledging Christianity’s influence somehow crosses a forbidden line. Teachers tell me privately, *“We understand, but we’re not allowed to teach it. They often do not know or understand the laws that allow them to.”*

This fear creates silence.

Scared people don’t volunteer to testify. They don’t attend committee meetings. They don’t want to risk their careers over a single sentence that could be taken out of context. They have so much on their plate that inviting an administration conference or angry letter is the last things they want, so they sadly, take the easy route.

Yet the result is devastating: a generation of students learning history **without context, without faith, and without hope**—because their teachers are too afraid to engage the holes in the texts and share the whole truth.

And that is made more difficult with the formatting of questions in AP exams and study materials that frame the material outside of Christianity’s historic importance.

Most teachers today simply **regurgitate what’s in the textbook**. And if anything is added, it is almost always filtered through a **progressive modern lens**, which easily reframes the narrative, while the profound Christian influence that guided our founders is quietly suppressed.

This has been happening through **panel-written textbooks for decades**, and it has led to a complete distortion of the full picture of our past.

You heard it last week:

There were no answers or guarantees that if we read a primary source by Gabriel Muhlenberg that we would be defended.

In fact, one opponent told us that we should go to our Union or the Dept of education for sources and defense. Really? The Union, which we were members of when we were forced to be is widely against our faith and widely in support of progressive anti-christian values. That’s a little like a lamb seeking advice from a hungry wolf on which platter to sit at his dinner table.

Redundancy:

WE heard that the bill was redundant and these rights already exist, but what teacher who say, wants to share the fourth verse of our National anthem would not question it after hearing Daniels of the ACLU speak last week? Daniles was asked by Rep. Click whether aclu will sue the teacher. The response was that the ACLU typically doesn’t sue the teacher, they will sue the school district. Oh, How reassuring! That alleviates the fear.

Keep in mind, our experience is that teachers do not know the law and what they are allowed and to be told to ask their union or administration has been the problem: the response is often also from ignorance or implicit bias.

In short, those opponent testimore firm up the fact that we need the Charlie Kirk heritage act. Students need it.

The Black Dot Lesson

Let me tell you about a lesson I use in my classroom.

I hold up a **clean white sheet of paper** with a small black dot in the corner.

I ask my students, *"What do you see?"*

Almost every hand goes up. "A black dot," they say.

I ask again, *"What else do you see?"*

They hesitate. "Nothing... just the black dot."

Then I ask them to think. How is it that this tiny mark draws all your attention, when **99.9% of the paper is pure, white, and unmarked?**

This moment becomes a discussion on **how we are trained to see only the flaws no matter how inferior to the big picture and part of every human experience**—whether as an audience member listening to a music performance, or as a history student told that Washington was primarily a slaveowner. We are conditioned to focus on what is wrong, rather than the greater expanse of what is true, good, and beautiful.

That black dot represents how history is often taught today. The focus is placed solely on mistakes or shortcomings—while the truth, goodness of christianity as a whole, and beautyof Christian sacrifices that defines the greater story are ignored.

How is History deconstructed/ constructivism:

American history has undergone decades of deconstrtuctivism to its own detriment. THere are a number of ways this happens i the classroom:

1) bias: Contrary to what opoents who teach SS in the schools stated last week, it should raise a red flag when anyone says they come to the table with no bias: we all have strating points of understanding and experiences that shape us, and implicit (unintnetional) bias pervades education.

2) intentional and unintentional missing context: this is HUGE. There are a number of way to do this, and it has been overwhelmingly successful for progressive secularism. It is used as a key

element for propaganda to great affect, especially in the classroom on specific topics against Christianity specifically.

The chief way this happens in history in school is by looking at the past through a modern lens. Our experience today cannot comprehend what it would be like to have to leave our homeland to worship in a different Christian denomination. So the modern lens, shaping how they view the past through their lens reframes history.

Examples: Slavery..was a world wide problem. FF were slave owners...

This FF was an "Anglican"...left at its wording, the student who gets no clarification subconsciously build an idea that Anglican is in juxtaposition to christianity, verses one of many denominations under the umbrella of Christianity which 52? Of 56 (the others believing in the Judeo christian God) were.

Or...you can get a widely different view of Abe lincoln if you are told about his early writings instead of summarizing his life in what he said and believed in his final years which is how we should remember historically: by what the final outcome of one's life or an event was, which the process to get there being a formative process we all experience in growth until death..

Lack of balance, or overemphasiing one view, or secondary sources over primary evidence, often occurring through implicit bias..

Omission: not just taking events out of context, but leaving them out altogether: I will believe.

Time and again last week we heard that the bill wasn't needed because "these topics are already being "Taught"

What does "taught" mean? (pause)

Who should decide what is important to learn in history?

Through what lens? Our modern lens, or the lens of the past IN context, using THEIR words and not our feeble explanations from a progressive pov.

Someone asked last week whether the textbooks had primary source material: The answer is no. The narrative is often decided by a panel of textbook writers through major publishers, and most on those committee are likeminded in progressive thought..

If a primary source is listed, it is in small print under sources, but usually students are told to take their teachers word for the truth.

Truth in Context

Truth must be understood **in context**—filtered through the lens of the time, not modern ideology seeking to reframe history. Education should teach **how to think**, not **what to think**:

They all claim they do: but if this is true then the overwhelming takeaway of education would NOT be that our founding fathers were evil men, or that our country is inherently racist to its core.

It would be that our rights come from God and NOT man. Our Nation saw its sin in slavery, and paid a heavy, heavy price in the lives of the shed blood of 750,000 lives. Christians still today, all over the world lose their lives like Charlie did by defending the Gospel.

As educators, we are tasked with presenting the truth. But when the resources available are incomplete or biased, we are forced to choose between **following the prescribed narrative** of the vague standards and **providing a more accurate, though potentially controversial, account.**

Yet, if we shy away from teaching the full truth, we deny our students the chance to learn **moral courage, personal growth, and learn from other's faith-driven decision-making.**

What would be the response to reading Truths/primary sources such as about the Barbey . Hans Balthaser (major swiss catholic theologian): Our situation today shows that beauty demands for itself at least as much courage and decision as do truth and goodness, and she will not allow herself to be separated and banned from her two sisters without taking them along with herself in an act of mysterious vengeance." [A-Z Quotes+1](#)

"The One, the Good, the True, and the Beautiful, these are what we call the transcendental attributes of Being, because they surpass all the limits of essences and are co-extensive with Being.

Greeting:

Good morning. (pause)

Thank you to the members of this committee for your service to students and to our state. (pause)

I deeply appreciate the time and effort you invest in ensuring that education serves the next generation well. (pause)

Introduction:

My name is Crystal Traini. (slight pause) I knew in 8th grade—the age of some of my oldest students today—that I wanted to be a teacher of music or history. (pause) Teaching is my passion. I began my career in public schools in Appalachia, Ohio, in the mid-1990s, and later earned a Master’s in Education, with top honors, from Boston University.

Yet, our personal experience with public education—particularly the failures in history instruction—made us hesitate to place our own children in public schools. We wanted them to have the full, accurate story of our nation. (pause)

So, instead of returning to the public school classroom, we sacrificed half of our educator income to homeschool our children classically through high school, giving them a strong foundation in truth, faith, and history. (pause)

As an empty nester today, I teach general music, including music history K-8, at a private, non-government-funded Classical school in the area.

History as the Hub of Education:

We believe history is the central hub of education. (pause) Think of education as a wagon wheel—history is the hub, and all other subjects—STEM, music, the arts—are the spokes. Every subject branches from history and is enriched by understanding the past. (pause) History is inherently cross-curricular, yet it is too often taught incompletely.

The Fear Among Teachers:

I want to speak honestly about something I hear constantly from fellow teachers and have felt myself: fear.

Teachers are scared. (pause) Many hesitate to bring up the Christian roots of our country, afraid to speak openly about the faith that shaped our founders, the prayer, Scripture, and divine providence that guided them.

Why? Many fear backlash—from administrators, unions, or parents—who have been taught that acknowledging Christianity’s influence crosses a forbidden line. Teachers tell me privately, “We understand, but we’re not allowed to teach it.” (pause) This fear creates silence. Teachers don’t volunteer to testify, don’t attend committee meetings, and avoid risk. The result is a generation learning history without context, without faith, and without hope.

When I Hesitated:

Two examples from my classroom:

- 1. I hesitated to have students memorize the fourth verse of our National Anthem: “Oh, thus be it ever...”*
- 2. Teaching the Marine’s Hymn, explaining the phrase “from the shores to Tripoli.”*

This phrase stems from the Barbary Wars in the 1780s. The U.S. faced threats from the Islamic Barbary States, including Tripoli, whose leaders claimed it was their religious duty to wage war on nations that did not pay tribute.

Primary source quote from Jefferson and Adams to John Jay (March 28, 1786):

“The Ambassador answered us that it was founded on the Laws of their Prophet ... that all nations who should not have acknowledged their authority were sinners, that it was their right and duty to make war upon them wherever they could be found, & to make slaves of all they could take as Prisoners, and that every Musselman who should be slain in battle was sure to go to Paradise.”

Interestingly, most online history lessons omit that the Barbary pirates were Islamic—a crucial detail. Would a teacher be allowed to use this primary source to explain the phrase “from the shores to Tripoli”? Why is this fact omitted?

Redundancy:

We heard that the bill was redundant and that these rights already exist. But ask yourself—what

teacher who wants to share the fourth verse of the National Anthem would not hesitate after hearing Daniels of the ACLU speak last week?

Daniels was asked by Representative Click whether the ACLU would sue the teacher. The response: the ACLU typically does not sue the teacher—they sue the school district. Oh, how reassuring! (pause for emphasis)

Teachers often do not know the law or what they are allowed to teach beyond vague standards. Being told to ask their union or administration is part of the problem. Responses are often shaped by ignorance or implicit bias.

In short, opponent testimony reinforces why we need the Charlie Kirk Heritage Act. Students need it.

The Black Dot Lesson:

In my classroom, I hold up a clean white sheet of paper with a small black dot. (pause, show gesture if possible) I ask, “What do you see?” Almost every hand goes up: “A black dot.” I ask again, “What else do you see?” They hesitate. “Nothing... just the dot.”

Then I ask them to think: how does this tiny flaw draw all attention, when 99.9% of the page is pure, unmarked white? (slight pause)

This is how history is often taught. We focus on flaws, mistakes, or shortcomings—while ignoring the truth, goodness, and beauty that define the greater story.

How History is Deconstructed – Why Students Misunderstand Their Country and Christianity:

Students often grow up misunderstanding their nation and viewing Christianity negatively—and it is not by accident. Decades of classroom practices and curriculum decisions have created this outcome.

- ***Reframing History:*** *Students are taught to view the past through today’s moral lens rather than the context of the time. When learning about slavery, the takeaway is often that founders were evil slaveowners—without understanding global struggles or the sacrifices made to correct injustice. The Christian faith of founders is often minimized or dismissed. Projects like the 1619 Project, critical race theory, and systemic-racism framing have compounded this, leaving students hopeless.*
- ***Selective Emphasis:*** *Textbooks overemphasize negatives while downplaying accomplishments, virtues, and faith-driven actions. Students focus on the “black dot” rather than the vast page of truth, goodness, and beauty in our nation’s story.*

- **Omissions:** Key details are left out intentionally or by oversight. Relying on secondary sources or progressive commentary removes opportunities to engage with the moral reasoning and faith-driven decisions of historical figures, leaving students to conclude that Christianity and traditional values are irrelevant—or worse, harmful.
- **Implicit Bias in Education:** Even well-meaning teachers unknowingly contribute to this narrative through modernized textbooks, peer influence, or fear of backlash. The combination of fear and incomplete resources reinforces a secular, anti-Christian perspective.

The result: students leave school with shame about their country, misunderstanding historical decisions, and skepticism—or hostility—toward Christianity. They do not see the courage of the Black-Robed Regiment or Gabriel Muhlenberg, or the faith-driven leadership that shaped our nation.

Truth, Courage, and Faith:

As educators, we are tasked with presenting objective truth: the good and the bad. Yet, far more of the Christian fabric that formed this country is missing from public classrooms. Incomplete resources force teachers to choose between a prescribed narrative and providing a full account.

Shying away from truth denies students the chance to learn moral courage and virtues. Students desperately need stories of Christian courage, triumph over evil, and our nation's Christian legacy. A citizenry taught to hate its Christian-foundings will not stand—a lesson Europe has painfully demonstrated.

In other words, teaching truth, goodness, and beauty requires courage. Students deserve teachers willing to take that step.

Closing:

We need legislation to empower teachers to teach history fully and honestly, without fear. Students deserve to learn about Christian influences, moral courage, and the profound decisions that shaped our nation. They deserve the truth, in context, presented faithfully.

Thank you for your time, your service, and for listening to a teacher's plea to restore courage, clarity, and truth in our classrooms. I stand ready for questions. (pause, nod to audience)

Final:

Greeting:

Good morning. *(pause)*

Thank you to the members of this committee for your service to students and to our state.
(pause)

I deeply appreciate the time and effort you invest in ensuring education serves the next generation well. *(pause)*

Greeting to members of the House:

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Yet, our experience with public education—particularly in history—made us hesitate to place our own children in public schools. We wanted them to have the full, accurate story of our nation.
(pause)

So, we sacrificed half of our income to homeschool classically through high school, giving them a strong foundation in truth, faith, and history. *(pause)* Today, I teach general music, including music history K-8, at a private, Classical school.

History as the Hub of Education:

History is the central hub of education. *(pause)* Think of education as a wagon wheel—history is the hub, and all other subjects—STEM, music, the arts—are the spokes. Every subject is enriched by understanding the past. Yet, history is too often taught incompletely, and I don’t believe it is an accident.

The Fear Among Teachers:

I want to speak honestly about something I hear constantly: fear.

Many teachers hesitate to bring up the Christian roots of our country, afraid to speak about the faith that shaped our founders. Why? Fear of backlash—from administrators, unions, or parents. Teachers often say privately, “I’m not allowed to teach “that.””

This fear creates silence. The result: students learn history without context, faith, or hope.

When I Hesitated:

Two examples of hesitation from my music classroom:

1. Memorizing the fourth verse of the National Anthem: “*Oh, thus be it ever...*”
2. Teaching the Marine’s Hymn: explaining the context of the phrase: “*from the shores to Tripoli.*”

In the 1780s, the U.S. faced threats from the Barbary States, including Tripoli, whose leaders claimed it was their religious duty to wage war on nations that did not pay tribute.

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Observed history lessons omit that the Barbary pirates were Islamic and exclude the previous quote—a crucial detail. Would teachers be allowed to share this primary source today? Is the takeaway from this omission truthful? Of course not.

Redundancy:

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Teachers often do not know what they are legally allowed to teach. Being told to ask a union or administration often reinforces fear or bias. This is exactly why we need the Charlie Kirk Heritage Act.

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How History is Deconstructed – Why Students Misunderstand Their Country and Christianity:

Students often grow up misunderstanding their nation and viewing Christianity negatively—and it is not accidental. Decades of classroom practices and curricular decisions have created this outcome.

- **Reframing History:** Students view the past through today’s lens. Slavery is often simplified to “founders were evil,” ignoring global context and the moral struggles of the entire world at the time. Positive influences of Christianity are minimized.
- **Selective Emphasis:** Textbooks highlight flaws while downplaying accomplishments, virtues, and faith-driven actions. Students focus on the “black dot” rather than the full page of truth, goodness, and beauty.
- **Omissions:** Key details are left out or framed through progressive commentary, removing opportunities to engage with founders’ moral reasoning and faith-driven decisions through primary source material.
- **Implicit Bias in Education:** Even well-meaning teachers unintentionally contribute to this perspective through modernized textbooks, peer influence, poor education, or fear of backlash.

The result: students leave school with shame about their country, misunderstanding historical decisions, and skepticism—or hostility—toward Christianity. They do not hear of the courage of

the Black-Robed Regiment or Gabriel Muhlenberg that helped garner their own freedoms, or the faith-driven leadership that shaped our nation.

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Students need stories of Christian courage, triumph over evil, and our nation's Christian legacy. A citizenry taught to hate its Christian-foundings will not stand—today's Europe shows this clearly. Teaching truth, goodness, and beauty requires courage. Students deserve teachers willing to take that step.

Closing:

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