

Opponent testimony against Ohio HB 486, Submitted by Julia Kay Coughlin, 11/12/25

To Chair Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Brennan, and members of Ohio House Education Committee,

I am a follower of Jesus Christ and a lifelong citizen of the State of Ohio and I object strongly to HB 486. HB 486 is not an expression of Christian faith, but it is instead a tool to use the Christian religion for political gain and to uphold power by any means necessary, including twisting history into lies in order to control what is taught in Ohio classrooms. HB 486 has no business being debated by the legislature of the State of Ohio, nor should it be placed into the Ohio Revised Code.

From my position of strong faith in the teachings of Christ, I am confused and wary about why this legislature would seek to enshrine Christianity into education in Ohio and into the Ohio Revised Code. Jesus Christ did not ask us to do such things for him. In fact, Jesus clearly commanded us to keep faith and government separate (Mark 12:17).

As a person who makes decisions based on reason and critical thinking as well as faith, I am also deeply troubled by the historical errors which serve as the foundation of this bill; I refer you to testimony from Ryan D. Jayne, Senior Policy Council of the Freedom from Religion Foundation Action Fund, as submitted to this committee on October 20, 2025, which succinctly lists just a few of the more egregious historical errors contained in the language of HB 486. Jesus Christ never asked us to lie for him. Nor did he permit others to speak lies in his name. Christ's entire ministry was built on speaking and acting with complete honesty. He firmly but kindly called out the lies that occurred among his own disciples.

Finally, it is a dangerous precedent to attempt to codify into law the idea that any human being - in this case, Charlie Kirk - can and does represent a single correct interpretation of the totality of both American history and Christian faith. One tenet of the Christian faith is the acknowledgement that all human beings are flawed. But even worse, during his lifetime, Kirk interpreted scripture and acted in ways that directly contradict the actual teachings of Christ, and he advocated for outright discrimination in daily life as well as discussions of history. I do not consent to having my faith hijacked in his memory nor for any other political reason or personal gain.

It is unethical and unfaithful to intentionally misrepresent Christ's teachings for political control. So, in the great tradition of Christ's own actions, HB 486 is an idea we must reject immediately in the same way Christ courageously flipped over tables in the temple (Matthew 21:12-13).

Respectfully submitted by Ohio citizen Julia Kay Coughlin, November 12, 2025