

Chairman/Chairwoman/Chairperson Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Brenda Buchanan. I live in Columbia Station, a township in Lorain County.

I am opposed to Senate Bill 34 that requires the display of one of the following documents in each classroom: The Mayflower Compact, The Declaration of Independence, The mottoes of the United States and Ohio, The Ten Commandments, The Magna Carta, The Bill of Rights, The United States Constitution or The Articles of Confederation.

First, the Ten Commandments is a religious, not an historic document. Article 6, section two of the Ohio Constitution does not allow school funds to offer an exclusive right to one religion by making this an unfunded mandate where districts may accept donations for the documents and/or a monument. I see where you have tried to sidestep this rule by making this an unfunded mandate and allowing districts to accept donations for its presence in our schools.

Second, all of these documents should be introduced to students under the curricula of World or American History. What is the purpose of displaying them in each classroom without the context and timeline of their influence? The 1215 Magna Carta established that a ruler and their government were not above the law and inspired our Constitution. The 1620 Mayflower Compact established equal laws for the settlers in Plymouth. The 1776 Declaration of Independence separated America from the rule of a king, resulting in the founding of the United States of America. The 1789 Constitution was a document built upon the Articles of Confederation and the Bill of Rights and has been amended in our pursuit to form a more perfect union.

Just hanging these documents in a classroom or placing them in stone in front of a school will never imbue students with their significance or their intrinsic value. Stop wasting legislative time on ridiculous activities such as this and please focus your time on ensuring that our public schools are funded properly and our students receive a good solid education.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this irrelevant bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.