

Good afternoon Chairman Brenner and members of the education committee. My name is Michael Carney, and I serve as a science teacher in one of the largest public school districts in Ohio. My lifework is to cultivate virtue, high-character, and critical thought in pursuit of academic excellence.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today in support of Ohio Senate Bill 113. My testimony today will provide reasons and evidence as to why this bill is necessary due to the radical change of priorities I have witnessed in my district in a relative short amount of time, and the district made it official in 2021 with the creation of its DEI department. District ideologues of the DEI movement are picking and choosing winners and losers ever since Diversity coordinators and now DEI directors and agendas have been intentionally trying to change the landscape of education from one of academic excellence and virtue to a radical, secular activism. This activism, in large part, has lead our schools to be more about social justice and therapeutic education than classical education. It is crucial to destroy and prevent the radical roots of the cult-like DEI movement and its official policies and practices in order to ensure and restore classical education itself and basic matters of fairness, equality, and meritocracy in Ohio's public schools.

At its core, this bill seeks to restore and preserve the principle that all students and staff, regardless of race, sex, or group identity, should be treated with fairness and respect. My district has been doing work contrary to this through a radical DEI lens within four major aspects of our strategic plan: (1) Hiring, which includes a multitude of supplemental jobs and pay for DEI efforts; (2) Professional Development; (3) Student Discipline; and (4) Curricula revisions. I have attached our District DEI director's job description and DEI 3-year action plan. These reveal an agenda across the aforementioned 4 aspects of our District's strategic plan.

First, this bill will help to ensure that hiring and professional development within our schools are based on qualifications, competence, and character, not on race, religion, sex, or gender identity. We want to encourage schools to hire the most qualified teachers, administrators, and staff based on their ability to teach, their expertise, and their commitment to our children's success—not based on whether they belong to a certain demographic group. Also, our schools have brought a disproportionate number of radical, feelings-driven, social workers and DEI programs and supplements instead of classical education teachers and academic support staff. Examples of mandatory staff PD include microaggression training (which we had to teach to our students), Implicit bias, restorative justice, and Kaleidoscope Youth Center's "Gender Unicorn" and notions of adultism and how children as young as 12 years of age know better than their parents about serious matters of gender and sexuality. For our students to succeed, they need role models who can inspire them through their abilities and dedication, not through the lens of group identity.

Secondly, Senate Bill 113 will help ensure that curriculum choices are made based on their educational value and relevance to the students, rather than on the political or ideological preferences of a few. A curriculum that is focused on fostering critical thinking, intellectual curiosity, and personal growth in virtue is essential for the development of young minds. This

bill aims to create an environment where students can explore ideas and learn without being subjected to indoctrination based on identity politics or divisive ideologies. Furthermore, with respect to discipline, this bill recognizes that every student deserves to be treated as an individual, not as a representative of a group. When we focus too heavily on race, sex, and group identity and its corresponding disparities in their data, we risk creating a divisive environment that undermines the concept of equal treatment under the law. Parents and staff like me are tired of seeing the increased chaos, fights and unequal discipline people receive based on group identity. There are no uniform standards enforced. It is essential that all students feel that they are being held to the same standards, regardless of their background. This bill ensures that student discipline and behavior are based on individual actions, not group characteristics.

Finally, bowing down to the feelings of a few has intentionally brought division in our community over the years... maybe without even knowing it due to a cult-like allegiance to an ugly liberal orthodoxy or ideology that creates a hierarchy of groups who are the oppressed and who are the oppressors; our schools have been picking and choosing in such a way that creates division in our schools rather than respectful understanding of differences, civil discourse, and unity among our people. This bill seeks to prevent the divisiveness and inequality that can result from policies that prioritize group identity over individual ability and achievement. Let's get back to educating our kids. I urge you to support this bill and help protect the future of Ohio's education system.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,  
Michael Carney