
Katherine Schwanitz

13001 Cherry rd Vermilion Ohio 44089
Kschwanitz@gmail.com
(440) 308-9389
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Senator Michael A. Rulli, Chair
Ohio Senate Education Committee
Senate Building
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: Opposition to Senate Bill 156 – “Success Sequence” Curriculum Requirement

Dear Senator Rulli and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 156, which mandates instruction in the so-called “success sequence” for Ohio students in grades six through twelve.

While I support educational efforts to equip students with knowledge and skills to build successful lives, I have serious concerns about the implications, assumptions, and unintended consequences of this bill.

1. Promotes a Narrow and Prescriptive Pathway

The “success sequence” as defined in the bill—completing high school, obtaining full-time work, and marrying before having children—promotes a narrow, overly prescriptive formula for success. It implies that only one life path leads to avoiding poverty, when in fact, success and stability can be achieved through many different means and in diverse family and life structures. This framing risks marginalizing students from single-parent families, LGBTQ+ families, or those who do not or cannot follow this specific sequence.

2. Fails to Address Structural Barriers

The bill oversimplifies poverty as a matter of personal choices rather than structural inequality. It ignores systemic barriers such as underfunded schools, racial disparities, wage stagnation, and lack of access to affordable healthcare and childcare. Focusing curriculum time on moralizing personal decisions distracts from real policy solutions that address the root causes of poverty.

3. Potential for Ideological Indoctrination

The marriage-before-children message raises significant concerns about pushing a particular set of social or religious values into public school curricula. Schools should teach critical thinking, evidence-based health education, and economic literacy—not prescribe life choices tied to controversial moral judgments.

4. Misuse of Instructional Time and Resources

Public schools already face tight schedules, testing requirements, and staffing shortages. Mandating instruction on a subjective lifestyle framework further burdens teachers and takes time away from academic content that is crucial to student success—such as financial literacy, STEM education, and college/career readiness.

I urge you to reject SB 156 and instead support policies that give students real tools to succeed: increased funding for public education, mental health services, career-technical education, and equitable access to opportunities.

Thank you for considering my perspective on this important issue.

Sincerely,
Katherine Schwanitz