



**Opponent Testimony for Senate Bill 34
Senate Education Committee**

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Dr. Christina Collins, Executive Director
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Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on Senate Bill 34. My name is Dr. Christina Collins, and I serve as the Executive Director of Honesty for Ohio Education.

Honesty for Ohio Education is a statewide, nonpartisan coalition committed to ensuring that every child has access to a high-quality, honest, and inclusive public education. We believe deeply in strong local governance, community engagement, and educational practices that empower, rather than constrain, students, educators, and school leaders.

Senate Bill 34, the “Display of Founding Documents of Historic Significance Act,” is unnecessary. Ohio schools already teach the *Declaration of Independence*, the *United States Constitution*, the *Ohio Constitution*, and other foundational texts as part of standard social studies instruction. Many schools already display these documents by local choice. This bill does not expand learning opportunities, it simply mandates what districts are already free to do.

More concerning is the bill’s inclusion of the *Ten Commandments* on the list of documents permitted for display. This inserts overtly religious doctrine into public school classrooms, spaces that must remain neutral to protect the rights and freedoms of **every** student. While the Ten Commandments hold deep personal significance for many individuals and faith traditions, their placement in public classrooms crosses a constitutional boundary. Public schools must never be pressured, directly or indirectly, into religious endorsement or indoctrination. Doing so risks marginalizing students of minority faiths or no faith at all and undermines the inclusive and welcoming environment that every child deserves.

Further, this bill represents yet another instance of legislative overreach into local decision-making. Ohio’s districts vary widely in context, school culture, and community values. Locally elected school boards are fully capable of determining what is appropriate to display in their buildings and how best to support civic education. This bill is not responding to any

demonstrated problem. Instead, it imposes a one-size-fits-all requirement at a time when schools are already managing significant instructional, operational, and fiscal challenges.

Ohioans consistently express that they want their schools focused on preparing students for the future: strengthening critical thinking, ensuring accurate history, and building civic readiness. These goals are achieved through high-quality curriculum and strong local leadership, not symbolic mandates from Columbus that duplicate existing practice and blur constitutional lines.

For these reasons, Honesty for Ohio Education respectfully urges the committee to reject SB 34. Our students deserve policies that meaningfully support civic learning, preserve local control, and maintain the clear separation of church and state necessary for public schools to serve every Ohio child.

Thank you for your time and consideration.