



Sarah Kaka, Ph.D. Written Testimony as an Interested Party on Senate Bill 1
Tuesday, June 15, 2021

Chair Manning, Vice-Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson, and Members of the House Primary & Secondary Education Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Sarah Kaka. I am an Assistant Professor of Education at Ohio Wesleyan University, and a 20-year veteran of social studies education, having first taught as a high school social studies teacher for 10 years prior to making the shift to higher education. I speak to you today as the Higher Education Representative of the Ohio Council for the Social Studies (OCSS), and the Chair of the Ohio Professor of Social Studies Education Special Interest Group (SIG). Members of the SIG are social studies methods instructors in teacher preparation programs across Ohio.

Thank you for the time you have invested in financial literacy. The Ohio Professors of Social Studies Education are grateful for your time and attention to such an important matter.

Today, I will be testifying as an Interested Party for the Bill under consideration today. While the SIG anticipates being able to support the Bill, we have not yet seen a substitute Bill that includes amendments we have been assured are forthcoming. The SIG request the following amendments to SB 1:

First, we are strongly in favor of a standalone 0.5 unit Financial Literacy class but request that language be worded such that it reduces the elective requirements from 5 units of instruction to 4.5.

64% of Higher Education social studies faculty that took the OCSS survey last week are in support of all students being required to complete a stand-alone course in financial literacy in order to graduate from high school. They believe that it is a practical course that meets a societal need, as students must be prepared for all demands of adulthood, one of which is being financially literate.

However, they overwhelmingly believe that this course should not be pulled from social studies' 3.0 graduation requirement units. Since teachers from several different curriculum areas will be teaching this course, it is logical to have the elective hours come out of the 5 elective hours. One professor said that they "fully support students having to learn financial literacy as it is a crucial life skill that everyone needs and only some gain in their home setting. However, I do not support this coming at the cost of other social studies content...financial literacy should absolutely be taught and taught well, however, not at the cost of the already limited social studies content that students are receiving."

Our second reason for testifying before you today is that we also fully support the anticipated compromise in the substitute bill regarding the licensure validation, which states that educators educators with either a business education license, or a family and consumer sciences education, or an earned Ohio Adolescence Young Adult Integrated Social Studies License, issued on or after September 2013, would be exempt from the "licensure validation" required of Senate Bill 1 necessary to teach the 0.5 units of Financial Literacy required for high school graduation.



Education majors in these content areas have demonstrated mastery in financial literacy through their university coursework and existing state licensure examinations. All other teachers will need to earn validation as they have not demonstrated mastery.

In a second survey that was sent to SIG faculty, 100% of respondents indicated that they believe their institution adequately prepares AYA social studies teachers to teach financial literacy.

There is a growing trend in universities to have stand-alone financial literacy methods classes as part of their licensure requirements. For example, at The University of Akron and University of Findlay, students complete a standalone (3 credits) course in Teaching Financial Literacy, in addition to their Economics and social studies teaching methods courses. At Bowling Green State University, students take an Econ for Social Studies Teachers, in addition to a 3-credit financial literacy course (Business Problems of the Consumer).

At other universities, such as Ohio Wesleyan, Otterbein, and Hiram, that don't have standalone financial literacy or econ methods courses, this content is embedded in social studies methods and economics courses. At OWU, where I teach, in their Secondary Social Studies Methods course, teacher candidates get specific instruction on how to teach the Ohio Financial Literacy Standards, and actually plan lessons and create formative assessments aligned with them.

Additionally, as of September 2013, all Ohio Adolescent Young Adult Integrated Social Studies License candidates must take and successfully pass the Ohio Assessment for Educators exam. State data from the past three years show that Ohio social studies preparation programs are preparing teachers effectively enough to pass the Economics Domain of the exam by the same margin that they pass the other four domains of the exam.

The Economics Domain includes an entire competency dedicated to Financial Literacy. Competency 0015 assesses candidates' ability to "Understand basic economic concepts, microeconomics, and consumer economics and personal finance." Ohio Adolescence Young Adult Integrated Social Studies License candidates over the past two years perform better on this competency than other competencies.

I ask you to consider the SIG testimony on this important education bill and ask that you consider these proposed amendments. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

I will now take any questions you may have.

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