



Proponent Testimony
Members of the House State and Local Government Committee
Support for Sub H.B. 327
Prohibit Teaching, Advocating, or Promoting Divisive Concepts

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June 23, 2021

Chair Wiggam, Vice Chair John, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the Ohio House State and Local Government Committee:

My name is Kathy Johnson, and I am Assistant Ohio State Director for Proclaiming Justice to the Nations. Thank you for the opportunity to present proponent testimony on House Bill 327, legislation which will require that Ohio prohibit teaching, advocating, or promoting divisive concepts. As a strong supporter of H.B. 327, I will speak to the substitute bill which I encourage this committee to bring to the House floor.

The Declaration of Independence, the forward vision of our Founding Fathers according to “the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God,” asserts that “all men are created equal.” To these immortal words, and a list of grievances with King George, our Founders pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor. Subsequently, Americans would fight and die in a bloody Civil War and engage in long fought political struggles intended to bring freedom and equality of opportunity to all Americans. Indeed, these struggles led to great reforms such as abolition, women’s suffrage, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stated in 1963: *“I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.”* Reverend Dr. King believed that the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were promissory notes to all Americans.

This nation, while historically imperfect, has achieved greatness among nations and has strived for personal freedom, security, and prosperity. We stand ever closer to the vision of our Founders and of Reverend Dr. King to be fully realized, yet deliberate division has become a prominent and dangerous ideology in our schools, universities, agencies, and beyond.

It is identity politics, by intentional promotion of cultural Marxism, that threatens to subvert the progress and hope of this great nation. This is a movement to pound out the pillars of unity, faith, family, and love of country.

Identity politics defines people by their racial and social groups, which emphasizes collectivism and demphasizes individuality. The dogma of identity politics arranges and ranks people according their perceived privilege and power. This ideology divides people into “oppressor” and “oppressed” groups, and uses the concept of intersectionality to promote the idea that all perceived oppressed victim groups are interconnected. Identity politics also advances the backward-looking notion that the United

States is a fundamentally racist and oppressive nation. Within identity politics, “equity” is a term that has been borrowed to promote equality of outcome rather than equality of opportunity.

Moreover, stressing racial and social divisions artificially perpetuate the very ideas that we seek to abandon; that minority groups are oppressed by a white majority. While racism has not been totally eradicated, most Americans find it abhorrent.

It is unconscionable that these concepts are being taught to children today. It is morally unjust that white children are assigned guilt for the sins of their forefathers, while minority children are taught a paralyzing mentality of victimhood. Identity politics promotes racial grievance, pits children who should be playing together against each other, fosters mistrust, and teaches them disdain for America. Simply put, identity politics is racism.

All Americans are heirs to the vision of our Founders and must be encouraged to seize the abundant opportunities that this great nation affords to them. Individual responsibility and industry are essential parts of this success.

There is an urgency to this bill due to a recent proposed rule change by the US Department of Education prioritizing these controversial concepts in American History and Civics Education. This proposed rule change was objected to in a letter dated May 19, 2021 and signed by twenty state attorneys general, including Ohio Attorney General, David Yost.

Sub H.B. 327 comprehensively defines the “divisive concepts” that are at play in our schools, universities, and agencies. I am grateful to Representatives Grendell and Fowler Arthur for their diligent efforts to bring this accurate and comprehensive bill before this committee and to the many cosponsors who have supported and joined their efforts.