

Opponent Testimony for House Bills 322 and 327
Ann Shroyer
State and Local Government Committee
September 22, 2021

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chairwoman John, Ranking Member Representative Kelly, and Members of the State and Local Government Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Ann Shroyer. I am a parent of a 2nd grader in Westerville City Schools and I strongly oppose HB 322 and HB 327.

As a parent of an elementary school student I oppose these bills because my child and all Ohio children deserve an honest, diverse, and accurate education in our schools. History and current events are complex and should be taught with a clear look from several viewpoints.

Just the nature of this bill and its subsequent enforcement defy logic. This list of “divisive concepts” was formed based on what expertise by the bill’s sponsor or the lobbying group that wrote the group? How did you determine that these were the important divisive concepts? What is the basis for inclusion/exclusion? What metric will you use to determine the proper amount of “discomfort, guilt, anguish or distress” that merits enforcement of this bill? Are trace amounts of discomfort enough? Will scientific study be done to determine that the discomfort is from a social studies lesson and not just gassiness? Does a student have to openly sob to merit enforcement? These bills attempt to somehow legislate emotions in a classroom but with no real scientific basis to do so.

To discourage or prohibit the teaching of a topic that causes a student to “feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress on account of an individual’s race or sex” is offensive to the humanity of our students. Historical accounts should make us feel – we should feel discomfort when reading about the treatment of those who survived or were killed in the Holocaust. We should all feel anguish when reading about infants being taken from their mothers during slavery. We should feel distress that women were beaten while advocating for their right to vote. I want my child to move through this world with empathy for his fellow classmates, neighbors, citizens. Learning diverse viewpoints and the full and accurate picture of our history is the key to that development of empathy.

When all our children are given accurate lessons in history, they have a shared language and knowledge base to build connections.

I also am strongly opposed to any teacher's "religious or philosophical beliefs" being allowed in my son's classroom. My son's religious instruction is the responsibility of his parents, not public school faculty. I do not want a teacher who believes in a literal translation of the bible teaching creationism in school when it has no basis in scientific fact or refusing to teach evolution because a religious belief. I do not want misogynist or homophobic lessons/comments being allowed because of a teacher's religion. There is a place for religion and faith, and it is not in public school.

As a parent of a public school student in Ohio, and a product of Ohio public schools and University, I ask you to strongly consider my testimony opposing HB 322 and 327 and vote NO on this bill.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Shroyer