

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: _____

Name: _____

Are you representing: Yourself Organization

Organization (If Applicable): _____

Position/Title: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Best Contact Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): _____

Specific Issue: _____

Are you testifying as a: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? _____

Please provide a brief statement on your position:

Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.

YWCA IS ON A MISSION

Charla J Hale
YWCA Hamilton
Ohio State & Local Government Committee
H.B. 322 – Opponent Testimony
September 22, 2021

Chairman Wiggman, 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 Charla Hale and today I am representing YWCA Hamilton and am a member of the Ohio Council of YWCAs, a coalition of 14 sister YWs across the state. We strongly oppose HB 322.

YWCA is an antiracist organization focused on eliminating racism, empowering women, and fighting for peace, justice, and dignity for all. Founded in 1900, the YWCA Hamilton is thriving and innovative century-old organization and the recognized leader in Butler County for eliminating racism and empowering women with programs that heal individuals and enhance community life. For more than 115, the YWCA has continued the tradition of offering programs that make a difference in the community. We currently house Dove House, the only domestic violence shelters in the county and support low-income housing for 29 once chronically homeless individuals.

This legislation would create restrictions around learning fundamental truths about today's world that ultimately will hinder our mission. Without the foundation of knowledge necessary to combat racism and gender discrimination, Ohio's children will be ill-equipped to combat issues impacted by systematic racism, such as our core issues: the housing crisis and the childcare crisis. Women and girls of color specifically are more likely to experience heightened discrimination against them; passing this legislation will also codify the disempowering of women and girls of color, whose experiences and stories will be legislated out of the curriculum by state-power that is *not* representative of them in the first place. Furthermore, I oppose this legislation for the following reasons:

1. **STUDENTS:** This legislation holds students back from engaging with perspectives outside of their own, thus barring them from cultivating critical thought-- something that is necessary to build a successful future. YWCA strongly believes that our children deserve a strong and realistic foundation to their understanding of race and gender and should not be devalued in their education. The passage of this legislation also leaves Ohio children vulnerable to real world problems, college and adult life, and understanding their own worldviews in a world that is *already discussing these subjects in accessible formats, such as on the internet.*

YWCA IS ON A MISSION

2. **EDUCATORS:** YWCA recognizes the extensive pedagogy that is necessitated from teachers in today's age, who act as stand-in parents, nurses, therapists, and more when it comes to the care of their classrooms. During this dangerous time of COVID-19, should this legislation pass, it will create only more of a barrier for teachers in their classrooms to ready their students for the world. We believe this bill uses vague language that may lead to self-censorship of teachers who, in light of this, may be fearful of losing their jobs when approaching real history. It restricts the curricula, teaching methods, and lesson plans. This puts a tremendous burden on teachers, who are molding the minds of tomorrow's leaders and workers. Furthermore, punishing educators for teaching the true history of their diverse classrooms is forsaking their hard-earned pedagogy. It is punishing teachers for teaching: a field that is already underfunded and undervalued in Ohio.
3. **COMMUNITIES:** this legislation centers the history of white Americans, and insistently ignores the history of people of color, who have made the country what it is. Should this legislation pass, it will cripple the needs of communities of color, ignore the pain, suffering, and *resilience* of these communities. In our community in particular, there is significant cultural impact of Native, African and Latinx Americans. This legislation would deny our community to learn its rich history and the perseverance of these groups.

All children deserve an opportunity to learn the stories of their predecessors, and for non-white students, these histories are essential to understanding themselves. Erasing or muddling the true history of the US will harm all Americans. Additionally, learning about diversity, equity, and inclusion in a child's curricula is imperative for cultivating a well-rounded Ohio citizen. We know that more diversity is good for the Ohio economy, for our social relations, and for uplifting our state to the best it can be.

YWCA Hamilton will always stand in favor of women and people of color. Our histories and stories matter. We are looking for honesty, equity, and legislation that reflects the needs of *all* Ohioans. HB 322 does not provide this. We urge you to hear our voices.

Thank you,

Charla J Hale
Director of Racial Justice
YWCA Hamilton