

Opponent Testimony for House Bill 322
Kathryn S. Garvey, Vice President, Board of Education, Chagrin Falls Exempted Village Schools
State and Local Government Committee
September 21, 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 Kathryn Garvey. I am the Vice President of the Chagrin Falls Exempted Village Schools Board of Education in Chagrin Falls, Ohio. I strongly oppose HB 322.

As an elected school board member and mom to three Ohio students, I oppose this bill because in order to achieve academic excellence, students must be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of whether it makes an adult uncomfortable. It is only in a culture that welcomes, accepts, and affirms the identity of every student that students will be able to thrive.

Teachers and parents know “kids must Maslow before they Bloom.”

Maslow’s hierarchy of physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization needs teaches us that there’s more to a student’s behavior and a child’s ability to achieve academically than what we see on the surface. Children need more than lessons taught by talented teachers to truly achieve their best.

When students have self-esteem issues, teachers see behavioral patterns such as poor focus and disengagement. When students don’t feel safe in their classrooms, communities, or households, they’re in a state of alert, which may prevent them from learning and thriving. This won’t go away until the problem is solved. When students don’t feel accepted or like they belong, they may act out or become withdrawn socially and academically.

It is only when students are entirely able to participate in class - because they feel safe, feel like they belong, feel confident and connected, are affirmed in their identity – that Bloom’s taxonomy can be applied. Only then can students remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create. Only then can they actualize their best academic selves. And academic excellence will be achieved only if educators are allowed to teach students to look at a variety of perspectives and experiences—a rich landscape of experiences – to embrace honesty about who we are, develop integrity in how we treat others, and inspire courage to do what’s right.

As an elected school board member, I ask you to strongly consider my testimony opposing HB 322 and vote NO on this bill.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any additional questions or provide input as needed. You may reach me at Kathryn.garvey@chagrinschools.org.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathryn S. Garvey
Vice President, Board of Education
Chagrin Falls Exempted Village Schools