

Opponent Testimony for House Bill 322
Kimberly Anzek, PhD, Mosaic Psychological Services
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 Kimberly Anzek. I am a clinical child psychologist in the state of Ohio. I strongly oppose HB 322.

As a psychologist I oppose these bills because this bill is a huge step backward in our society. Allowing teachers to teach history and about current events is how we, as a nation and as humans, learn from the past in order to make the future better. There are things in our, and others' histories, that are controversial, but extraordinarily important for children to know and learn about so they can be informed citizens and make better choices as adults.

This proposed legislation is harmful to students, as future adults in Ohio, because it encourages narrow, singular viewpoints that perpetuate racist, discriminatory, and exclusionary abuse, trauma, behavior and narrative. It normalizes and models to perpetrate and tolerate abuse and trauma within staff and students. It harms the safety and emotional well-being of students by restricting social-emotional learning programs, like advisory groups. It prevents students from better understanding of individual identity, experience, and culture by preventing them from participating in diversity, equity, and inclusion programs. It devalues students by assuming they cannot handle complex and sometimes conflicting ideas. It prevents student discussion, debate, and analysis of controversial topics in which students often have a keen interest. It discourages student voice, student agency, and advocacy for others. It discourages informed citizenship, civic engagement, and community outreach through action civics, service learning, and advocacy projects. All of these things impair Ohio's economic growth and viability by restricting skills necessary for job readiness and productive teamwork. It also hinders a strong workforce development in Ohio, as it will drive competitive talent away from Ohio.

Additionally, the proposed legislation is too subjective to lend itself to fair enforcement. The prohibited ideas are vague, as are the behaviors that constitute a violation. It is difficult to know what evidence would substantiate guilt and how to assign responsibility when a discussion veers from the proscribed path. While the language allows for “objective instruction without endorsement,” another highly subjective idea, the consequences are so intimidating they make any instruction dangerous to the educator, resulting in self-censorship to avoid controversy.

As a clinical child psychologist, 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 mosaicpsychological@protonmail.com, (937) 813-6240, or 330 N. Main St., Suite 104, Centerville, OH 45459.

Respectfully submitted,
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