

**Opponent Testimony for House Bill 322**  
**Kimberly Cook**  
**State and Local Government Committee**  
**09/21/2021**

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 Cook. I am a parent of school-aged children in the state of Ohio, and I strongly oppose HB 322.

As a concerned parent I oppose HB 322 because it is a contradiction to democratic principles. This bill directly prohibits requiring discussion of current events and current controversial issues. Are we so ashamed of how society behaves and what is happening in the legislature that we must hide it from our children?

Rather than hide from our past and present societal issues, we must guide our children in examining them in a scholarly manner. HB 322 prohibits educators from stating that slavery and racism are anything other than deviations from our nation's true principles. How, then, can a history teacher explain that the United States Constitution originally counted slaves as only 3/5 of a person? Or the Supreme Court's Dred Scot decision, whereby persons of African descent were deemed unable to become US citizens? These events are part of our history, at times part of our founding documents. They were not merely "deviations." And their effects are still felt today. Redlining has segregated our communities. The infant mortality rate for black infants far exceeds that of white infants, even when adjusted for variables such as educational and socioeconomic level. Racism has not disappeared and to suggest such mocks the intellectual capacity of our children. Furthermore, it mirrors the academic limitations placed on educators in the same dictatorial nations that we claim to abhor.

HB 322 presents a real and practical danger to our state's educational system. Our students will fall behind those in other states as their ability to critically engage in texts and discussion will be restricted. HB 322 is opposed by numerous local school districts and organizations, including the Children's Defense Fund, the Ohio Education Association, the Ohio Federation of Teachers, and the Ohio chapter of the League of Women Voters. Even the American Historical Association opposes this bill, stating that among other things, it will put Ohio AP students at a disadvantage. They will be unable to answer standardized test questions as they will have not been exposed to major topics found in typical United States history courses.

As a concerned parent, 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.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kimberly Cook