

Opponent Testimony for House Bill 322
State and Local Government Committee
09/20/21

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

Thank you for allowing us to testify today. We are Jared and Susan Cutler, leaders in the Citizens for a Better Beaver Creek Schools Action Group. We strongly oppose HB 322.

As leaders in a group committed to the advancement of diversity, equity, and inclusion in our community, and as private Ohio citizens, we oppose this bill because while HB 322 places restrictions on how race can be discussed in Ohio schools, the sponsor and every single co-sponsor of this bill is white. No non-white feedback or perspectives were sought or considered when this proposed bill was written. No group representing the interests of under-represented minorities had any input into the development of this bill to ensure non-white perspectives were part of this legislation. This bill is simply white legislators unilaterally setting the terms for discussions of race in Ohio schools without any regard for anyone else's perspectives. The lack of outreach to minority groups on this issue is inexcusable, and if the sponsor and co-sponsors of this bill are serious about legislating how we can talk about race in Ohio schools, they need to go back to the drawing board and involve representatives of groups that support minority perspectives. This legislation is white supremacy in action.

Moreover, the intent of this bill is to stifle any discussion or racial issues in Ohio schools that the sponsors and co-sponsors disagree with. That is frankly un-American – in America we don't legislate against ideas simply because a group with power doesn't like them. The language of "prohibited concepts" that is used in the bill implies that a political party that happens to be in power has the ability to quash discussion of concepts it disagrees with – and prohibition by members of a powerful political party of discussion of concepts they disagree with sets a dangerous precedent.

Finally – given that many minority groups on average have significantly lower income, less personal wealth, lower rates of home ownership, and higher rates of

poverty relative to the white population on average, we would like to see more legislation that encourages learning about the causes of these disparities with the view of one day eliminating them, rather than legislation that discourages addressing them in our schools. Why does this bill show so much concern for the feelings of a historically powerful group, and so little regard for the actual disparities experienced by many historically underprivileged minority groups?

As a leaders of Citizens for a Better Beaver creek, we ask you to strongly consider our testimony opposing HB 322 and vote NO on this bill.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to testify. We would be happy to answer any additional questions or provide input as needed. You may reach us at cutlerjared_@hotmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,
Jared and Susan Cutler
Citizens for a Better Beaver creek – Schools Action Group