

Opponent Testimony on HB 327
Ohio House State and Local Government Committee
9/21/2021

Chair Wiggam, Vice Chair John, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Ajit Chaudhari. I am a Professor at Ohio State University, a resident of Upper Arlington, and a parent of students in the Upper Arlington Schools. I strongly oppose HB 322.

As a parent, I oppose this bill because it devalues students by assuming they cannot handle complex and sometimes conflicting ideas. My children are 12 and almost 14, and they have been aware of their existence as members of a minority group for their entire lives. They deserve to learn from their teachers about the whole truth regarding history and society.

As a voter in Upper Arlington, I oppose this bill because it takes away local control from my elected Board of Education over our children's education. Since the founding of this country, one of our guiding principles for education has been local control unlike other countries such as France. It is inappropriate for the state to exert control in this way.

As a teacher and scholar in higher education, I oppose this bill because it denies academic freedom. The bedrock principle underlying institutions of higher education in the United States of America is that faculty can and must challenge ideas and teach their students to challenge ideas. The most important ideas to discuss, interrogate, and teach are divisive. We can only become a "more perfect union" by discussing these ideas.

I urge you to vote NO on this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any additional questions or provide input as needed.

Respectfully submitted,

Ajit Chaudhari