

Opponent Testimony for House Bill 322 & House Bill 327

Bethany Black, High School English Teacher

State and Local Government Committee

Sept. 21, 2021

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

My name is Bethany Black, and I am a high school teacher and parent of three school-age children. I'm writing to strongly oppose HB 322 and HB 327.

As a teacher of 12 years, I oppose these bills because they would set a dangerous precedent in encouraging narrow, singular viewpoints that perpetuate racist, discriminatory, and exclusionary abuse, trauma, behavior, and narratives. Our students need truth and transparency in their education, not watered down versions of our nation's history. The truth will move us forward in the fight for equity and inclusion and toward reconciliation, growth, and healing; these bills would move us backward and only divide us further. In my own classroom, I've seen students of privilege learn about red lining and Columbus's segregationist past become inspired to be a part of the solution in addressing the racial economic, educational, and healthcare disparities rampant in Ohio. These students, when exposed to the truth, will help our local and state communities progress toward a more just future for *all* Ohioans.

As a parent of triplet fourth graders, I oppose these bills because I want *all* children to better understand their differences in individual identity, experience and culture through participating in diversity, equity, and inclusion programs. These bills wouldn't allow that to happen. As a parent, I can't wrap my head around not wanting my children to understand the lives and experiences of people who aren't like them. Without truth and honesty in education, their ability to empathize with others would be hindered. How can we strive for a more just and kind world without this key aspect to education?

Again, as a teacher and a parent, I ask you to strongly consider my testimony opposing HB 322 and HB 327 and vote NO on this bill.

Thank you,

Bethany Black

High School English Teacher