

# WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you representing: Yourself  Organization

Organization (If Applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Best Contact Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes  No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): \_\_\_\_\_

Specific Issue: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you testifying as a: Proponent  Opponent  Interested Party

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes  No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide a brief statement on your position:

*Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.*

# **YWCA IS ON A MISSION**

**Charla J Hale**

**YWCA Hamilton**

**Ohio State & Local Government Committee**

**H.B. 327 – Opponent Testimony**

**September 22, 2021**

Chairman Wiggman, 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 Charla J Hale, the Director of Racial Justice representing YWCA Hamilton and I am a member of the Ohio Council of YWCAs, a coalition of 14 sister YWs across the state. We strongly oppose HB 327.

YWCA is an antiracist organization focused on eliminating racism, empowering women, and fighting for peace, justice, and dignity for all. Founded in 1900, the YWCA Hamilton is thriving and innovative century-old organization and the recognized leader in Butler County for eliminating racism and empowering women with programs that heal individuals and enhance community life. For more than 115, the YWCA has continued the tradition of offering programs that make a difference in the community. We currently house Dove House, the only domestic violence shelters in the county and support low-income housing for 29 once chronically homeless individuals.

A priority of YWCA is to educate and empower our communities. In service of that goal, we take on discussion around controversial but necessary elements of American society, ranging from Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) services to direct services in housing and youth development. All such programs demand from us an understanding of the intersections of race, gender, and class. This bill utilizes vague language that would impact the ability of state agencies-- ranging from the Department of Education to Public Health-- to provide training on systems of oppression and centering the voices of marginalized people. This is dangerous, considering that Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) face considerable health challenges in these spaces due to systematic racism. Even from COVID-19 statistics alone, we know that Black and Brown people are disproportionately represented in rates of death, under-vaccination, and economic fallout from the pandemic. With such recent data, it is worth noting that racism is a public health crisis-- one that would be difficult to teach with the language in this bill. YWCA champions antiracism in every space, including health.

The far-reaching impact of HB327 is as dangerous as it is divisive. Instead of fighting divisive concepts as it proclaims to do, it will reinforce systematic colorblind racism across the state. Colorblind racism, first introduced into American society in the post-Civil rights era, only

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reinforces de facto and systematic racism. Without taking true American history into account, we cannot right unjust events.

The YWCA Hamilton provides school-based youth development programming. This programming empowers young men and women to preserve, find their voice and fully understand their responsibility to make this world better. These students in our programs struggle with their identity and are often being marginalized and experiencing violence in their home community. The language of HB327 would make it impossible to meet students where they are and provide them with the skills to navigate and hopefully one day fix systems in our society that are racist, sexist, and homophobic.

Thank you,

Charla J Hale  
Director of Racial Justice  
YWCA Hamilton