

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair John, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee,

Thank you for letting me testify today, my name is Crystal Gnau. I am a lifelong Ohioan and I am reaching out to you today in regards to two proposed House Bills, HB322 and HB327. These bills can only jeopardize our children's future by limiting their competitiveness in the job market or when seeking higher learning. While these bills are specifically being promoted as targeting CRT, that does not exist and is not being taught; this will place our children at a severe disadvantage throughout their adulthood. How can one learn the truth in regards to our founding and our constitution if we cherry pick how or what we teach?

Ohio is not a progressive state if they teach abstinence only sexual health <https://www.publichealth.columbia.edu/public-health-now/news/abstinence-only-education-failure> and refuse to speak truthfully of our founding. Failing to educate our children will create a larger divide, not unite our state. It allows extreme beliefs to proliferate, end equality for all Ohioans, and given the relaxed gun laws, this can only lead to an increase in violence. These bills are not being written by educators or even by consulting them. Ohio's educators oppose these bills in great numbers and for good reason. These bills would also prevent the teaching of Women's suffrage, the civil rights movement, marriage equality, The Trail of Tears, which side Ohio fought in the civil war, and will make any individual seeking to obtain a law degree in Ohio impossible as specific classes and areas of study will be banned.

<https://abc6onyourside.com/news/local/columbus-city-schools-opposes-two-bills-seeking-to-ban-teaching-of-critical-race-theory-6-7-2021>

<https://www.daytondailynews.com/local/educators-bills-seeking-to-ban-teachings-about-racism-are-breach-of-local-control/G33676GECFDRLAM27ZWNXZMSBU/>

https://www.athensnews.com/news/local/athens-city-school-board-opposes-ohio-house-bills-aiming-to-ban-critical-race-theory-in/article_b99f3fa1-7318-583c-a8ec-220855f32007.html

<https://www.wfmj.com/story/44085667/local-teachers-to-rally-against-bill-banning-critical-race-theory-concepts>

Taken from the Ohio Education Association site, this is their stance on these bills: "The Ohio Education Association (OEA) opposes HB 322 and HB 327. Both bills will receive a hearing in the Ohio House of Representatives State and Local Government Committee at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, September 22, 2021 (see more info below).

HB 322 and HB 327 contain a toxic combination of murky prohibitions about instruction on "divisive" concepts that are linked to extreme penalties for students, educators, and schools.

The list of prohibited and "divisive concepts" in these bills appears to be intended as a reference to so-called "Critical Race Theory" (CRT). Neither the National Education Association (NEA) nor OEA advocate for teaching "CRT" to K-12 students, nor is it taught in any Ohio classroom. OEA is clear in its advocacy to provide honesty in education for students and protect educators

from harassment or fear for doing their jobs. These bills are a direct assault on the academic freedom and honesty our educators provide their students.

Instead of censorship and fear, let's trust Ohio's educators to do their jobs on behalf of students, and let's support honesty in education. That means creating an educational environment that invites diverse experiences and multiple perspectives, as well as providing the resources and materials for all students to engage fully with the standards-based curriculum."

The sponsors of these bills misrepresent what Critical Race Theory is in order to stoke fake moral outrage where there is none. CRT is not taught in schools; what educators do teach is true events in a manner to learn without blame in order to educate our future generations in regards to how to end racism and inequality as we experience it today.

<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/what-is-critical-race-theory-and-why-is-it-under-attack/2021/05>

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2021/07/02/why-are-states-banning-critical-race-theory/>

These bills are being introduced to entertain a small minority of our state, and by feeding the extremists, it will impact all of us. Ohio simply cannot continue to drag their constituents back decades and expect to attract the necessary components for a booming economy. We will see a drop in students willing to travel to one of Ohio's many colleges for their education, and those forced to be educated here will leave at their first opportunity.

By ignoring the truth about our history, we are bound to repeat it. As an Ohioan, as an American, why should we cower from the truth?

Crystal Gnau