

**Opponent Testimony for House Bill 327**  
**Dinorah Sánchez Loza, Assistant Professor, The Ohio State University, College of**  
**Education and Human Ecology**  
**State and Local Government Committee**  
**September 21, 2021**

Chairman Wiggam, 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 **Dinorah Sánchez Loza**. I am an Assistant Professor in the College of Education and Human Ecology at The Ohio State University where I focus my research and teaching on issues of educational inequality and, specifically, on the way race and class differentially impact youth political development. I also hold extensive experience as a high school teacher, having taught for seven years in an urban high school in addition to teaching students and supervising teacher-candidates. I strongly oppose **HB 327**.

As an Assistant Professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning and former high school educator, I oppose this bill because students deserve to learn diverse and accurate accounts of American history including those that discuss Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian American and Pacific Islander American/AAPI communities. Unfortunately, the social conditions and racialized dynamics experienced by Black, Latinx, and AAPI communities have been “divisive” in our country. Had the idea that Black people inherently possess all the rights that white land-owning men did, we would not have the 3/5 Compromise encoded in our founding documents. However, that was a “divisive” concept at the time. To not teach students about historically “divisive” concepts will negatively impact the development of their critical thinking skills not to mention their basic knowledge of US history.

Moreover, the bills are so vaguely worded in terms of defining what is and is not allowed to be taught in the classroom. Every topic and concept can be framed as “divisive.” The chilling effect of this vague language is that our teachers will be fearful of approaching important topics that, however challenging, provide our students with a broad worldview. Given my research expertise on exactly what teachers teach and how young people make sense of it, it is imperative, now more than ever, for our children to learn about historical and contemporary events as they are important parts of our country’s foundational history and current landscape.

Further, the bill prohibits teachers from teaching “divisive concepts” and asking that students argue in favor or opposition to particular ideas. This is directly in opposition to plethora of research that exists showing that students learn best when they are engaged; debate and rhetoric has long been used as an important and effective pedagogical tool. It not only helps students understand the material better and increase their research skills, it helps them to understand “the other side” and develop their empathy for those that may think differently than them. To prohibit this in schools will do exactly the opposite of what the writers of this bill propose—it will further divide our country as opposed to unifying us. On this item alone you should vote NO. This would not only disadvantage our students academically; it gravely threatens our democracy since students will not have the opportunity to practice their research and debate skills about important policy and social issues.

Finally, while the bill does permit “teaching divisive concepts in an objective manner, without endorsement” and allows for “the impartial discussion on historical oppression of a group based on nationality, color, ethnicity, race, sex, religion, or geographic region”, this vague language has the immense potential to severely backfire: would the writers of the bill require that teachers teach about the Holocaust in an impartial manner, thus giving credence to Adolf Hitler’s concerns?

As an Assistant Professor of Education and former high school educator whose research and expertise focuses on how the teaching of history and current political events greatly impacts how young people come to think and act as citizens, I ask you to strongly consider my testimony opposing HB 327 and vote NO on this bill.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dinorah Sánchez Loza  
Assistant Professor  
The Ohio State University