

Opponent Testimony for House Bill 327

Elizabeth O'Brochta
Retired educator
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 Elizabeth O'Brochta. As a retired elementary teacher, I strongly oppose HB 327.

As a retired educator who taught in Ohio for 34 years,] I oppose these bills because they prevent pathways to historical, social, and intellectual reckonings, reconciliations, growth, and healing.

Over my 30 years of teaching in the Upper Arlington City Schools, I spent 12 years as a third-grade teacher. The third-grade curriculum required me to teach the history of Upper Arlington. The materials and resources provided to me began with the history of the Adena People and then the Wyandot tribes. We then picked up with Ben and King Thompson purchasing the original 840 acres of land, south of present-day Lane Avenue, from James T. Miller in 1913. Part of our study included learning why our roads curved due to landscape architect William Pitkin, Jr and the idea of a planned community. A project that we did was to learn the history of our homes. While researching the deeds of our homes, some found there had been restrictions on who could live in Upper Arlington. Some rich discussions occurred. Some of us wouldn't be welcomed in the UA of 1913.

Only after I retired did I learn of the Litchford family and their part in Upper Arlington history. After reading *Secrets Under the Sidewalk*, I learned that the Upper Arlington High school had been built over the family cemetery. It saddens me to realize that there were children I taught who disengaged from the history of the early days of Upper Arlington as they were led to believe that there had been no representation of people that looked like them.

House Bill 327 would prevent student discussion, debate, and analysis of controversial topics such as the ones we learned when researching our homes and the addition of the Black American in Upper Arlington's past.

I believe that students as young as third grade can handle complex issues and learn from our history to better our community.

As a retired educator, 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. I would be happy to answer any additional questions or provide input as needed.
Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth O'Brochta
Retired Educator