

Thank you for allowing me to testify today.

As a student in Cleveland Heights, Ohio, I ask you to consider my testimony and vote no on HB 322.

While certainly none of us here would disagree with the specific examples laid out in these bills, we risk losing an important tradition of debate over current events and subjects that could be considered controversial. The foremost purpose of our state's public schools is not to fill the minds of students with historical facts, but to indoctrinate them into the republican virtues upon which our nation was built. Without the ability to discuss current events or policy, we risk raising a generation unprepared for the most basic components of citizenship. This ability is more important than ever in the age of fake news and internet propaganda. Banishing the republican virtue of civil discourse from the schools will leave us with weak minds incapable of critical thinking. How can we expect a new generation of statesmen or even just responsible community members, who cannot consider and reconcile the issues of the day?

Secondly, while contemplating attempts to regulate history education, you must not forget that history itself is divisive. I do not intend to engage in slippery slope reasoning, but we must recognize that this definition is liable to be stretched over time. History is a story, of war, murder, rape, genocide, oppression, and corruption. We cannot afford to ignore the past simply because someone has raised a child too weak to handle the horrors of the holocaust. No portion of history can be assigned as all good or all bad and separated from the rest. (On the subject of racism, for example: how can we silo this issue away, as a mere branch on a limb of American history, without dishonoring the memory of our white forefathers who died on the battlefields of the civil war?). I cannot help but be reminded of the great novel *Fahrenheit 451*, in which admittedly well meaning people slowly chip away at human knowledge for the sake of political correctness.

For my third contention, I would like to raise something from my firsthand experiences as a student. In history education, the central issue appears to be not any undue focus on controversial subjects, which can often be quite mentally stimulating, but rather a general apathy towards education on the part of too many students. If the state legislature wishes to create a more educated citizenry, there are much more important places to start.

As a student, I ask you to strongly consider my testimony opposing HB 322 and vote NO on this bill.

Sincerely,

Kenji Sakaie