

Opponent Testimony for House Bill 327

Laura Herrold Johnson, Montessori Mornings, independent preschool leader and administrator
State and Local Government Committee
September 20, 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 Laura Herrold Johnson. I am an independent preschool leader and administrator, as well as a parent who has always worked to be involved in my children's schools. I strongly oppose HB 327.

As an educator, I oppose these bills because teachers need to be able to teach relevant and interesting content in their classrooms. They need to be able to select the content they provide for the students in their rooms based on what is most useful, comprehensive, and relevant, not what is most politically palatable at that moment in time. We need to have trust in educators as partners with parents and raising our kids, the next generation, together. At a time when teachers and schools are under enormous pressure to do the best they can under even more trying circumstances than they usually manage, they face some of the least support and the most criticism. I struggle to understand what possible reasoning there could be to allow local control on something such as public health mandates but put forth legislation to threaten teachers for engaging with their students in the best ways that they know how.

As a parent, I strongly oppose these bills. We left a great district for a better fit elsewhere that was more supportive after incessant race based bullying. I am back in that district as a new kindergarten parent because of the progress and changes that have been made within the district since we left several years ago. The diligent and at times unpopular work by all the educators and administrators who made that happen are giving me hope for my younger kids' experience in the schools. It can be exhausting raising kids and I need the support of our community. I want my kids to approach the world with a sense of curiosity and interest, to look at the media and content they consume critically and skeptically, then draw their own assessments based on their values. I hope they approach the world with love, respect, and acceptance. I want them to be inclusive and kind. And I want them to be on equal footing and prepared for the world outside of the bubble we raise them in.

Given my experience and that of many of my teaching colleagues and fellow parents raising kids in an increasingly interconnected world, 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. You may reach me at laura6747@gmail.com

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Herrold Johnson