

This is Maria Ionno's testimony for 327

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 Maria Ionno. I am a high school student from Grandview Heights, I am a concerned community member, and I strongly oppose House Bills 322 and 327.

As a high school student in Ohio, I believe that House Bills 322 and 327 are creating an environment where teachers are restricted from teaching honesty in education. The argument for these bills is not whether a teacher should or should not talk about so-called "divisive topics", but that teachers should be able to show students authenticity and honesty in their education, and that students should be trusted by their government to make wise decisions with the information that they learn in the classroom. As I stand in front of you today, I feel that my own government does not trust me. The legislators trying to pass these house bills show students around Ohio and me that we are not trusted to comprehend difficult discussions in the classroom. These bills are creating dishonesty between us and our legislators. Try to think about twenty years from now when children who grew up without transparency in their own education become adults. We will have a society that was built on dishonesty.

America is a country full of all different genders, races, and ethnicities. To me, this is what makes America unique. As a country, we need to recognize that with all of these different groups of people comes different perspectives. Our country's history is built on all of these different perspectives. These bills will strip us from learning about history from more than just a wealthy white man's perspective. As students, we deserve to have multiple viewpoints when learning about different ideas that have shaped the country we call home. These bills are limiting a student's ability to understand America's deep history and form educated ideas.

These bills are restricting Ohio teachers in their classrooms and creating an environment where students can not form their own educated opinions. As a student and citizen of Ohio, I am begging you to say no to House Bills 322 and 327. Say no for the teachers, the students, and the future generations of Ohio.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any additional questions or provide input as needed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maria Ionno

Student