

To: Honorable Scott Wiggam, Chairman, State and Local Government Committee

From: Jill Galvan, Columbus resident since 2003; Associate Professor, Department of English, The Ohio State University

September 21, 2021

Dear Representative Wiggam:

Thank you for hearing my testimony today. I write to you as a parent-citizen of Ohio, as well as a faculty member at Ohio State University. In both these capacities, I am greatly concerned about the potential impacts of HB 322. I have lived in Ohio for almost 20 years, and I have been grateful that this is a state where my children and those in other families can thrive. But I am deeply concerned that HB 322 would take the state backwards and discourage people to make their lives here. It would be gravely detrimental to Ohio's citizens and to the welfare of our state. I sincerely hope that you will vote no.

A main reason to oppose HB 322 lies in the health of Ohio's economy. Over the years, I have watched many students finish degrees and go out into the working world. I write recommendation letters for them and keep in touch with them. My students have pursued careers in a wide variety of fields—law, business, medicine, education, criminology, software development, and more. HB 322 would surely undermine the preparedness of our graduates for a complex economy. Employers today want students who can work in teams and communicate in an increasingly interconnected environment. But HB 322 would underequip students by hindering their ability to understand others in a diverse world, in which people come to the table with difference experiences.

Additionally, I am positive that these bills would turn off business interests who would otherwise invest in the state. What employer would want to set up shop in a state that has deliberately hampered its citizens' social and cultural competency? This is not the recipe for collaboration, innovation, and a forward-thinking workforce.

As an educator, my primary concern is for learning. In the discussion of bills like these in Ohio and elsewhere, buzz phrases like "critical race theory" have caught the public imagination, becoming scare tactics. They little reflect what actually happens in the classroom when people talk about history or culture. Most of all, they oversimplify teachers' respect for a variety of student perspectives. While you may have heard that educators aim to indoctrinate young people, no teacher I know thinks that teaching means indoctrination. Teaching means cultivating knowledge in order to equip students to be curious, thoughtful, and open to new ideas. Nor are teachers shaming students, tarring the reputation of whole groups of people, or introducing concepts meant to be "divisive." Any educator knows that making a student feel ashamed undermines learning. Developing knowledge requires supporting students and building confidence. Certainly, there can be differences of perspective in the classroom—but

these are opportunities for learning, not embarrassment. Students develop the ability to hear each other out. This is practice for a skill that they will need in real life and real workplaces. I assure you that educators nurture the best in students, rather than shutting them down.

I am grateful for the opportunity to share these viewpoints, and I urge you to do the right thing for us all by turning back this bill.

Thank you once again.

Sincerely,
Jill Galvan