

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 [Carlos Kelly]. I am a [doctoral student working towards being a professor]. I strongly oppose [HB 322 or HB 327].

As an educator I oppose these bills because by proposing these laws, you, Republican legislators are effectively saying that Americans should not be responsible global citizens, that we should grow up ignorant of other peoples' plights. You, Republican legislators (white or not) stand in the way of a more honest education; what you all are saying is that some history matters more than others and we know this pattern already from history.

If kids do not learn the truth about slavery, they may never learn about how George Washington owned enslaved peoples and how he did everything possible to keep one of his renowned chefs, Hercules Posey, locked into slavery by not allowing him to stay over 6 months in the Northern city of Philadelphia (which would mean he would have to be freed). Instead, Washington made sure he could keep his enslaved people by continually sending them back and forth between his homes in Philadelphia and Virginia, avoiding the 6-month rule established in Philadelphia.

If you, Republican legislators continue to push exclusionary laws like HB 322 and HB 327 then you are furthering the gaps in education for all Americans, but especially the ones you are aiming to protect, white Americans. You want to make sure white kids don't grow up hating their race and etc. whatever excuses you are making to promote this bill. However, it is these very people who will suffer consequences in their jobs, families, and friends because they will reach adulthood and lack the knowledge and the capacity to be empathetic or to even understand the implications stemming from slavery and its ongoing systemic presence (through laws and policies) or how LGBTQ peoples have been and continue to be marginalized for simply loving someone of the same sex.

You, Republican legislators, are robbing children of the capacity to be more responsible global citizens all because you want to throw some red meat to your base. The problem here becomes cyclical. People did not learn true historical narratives and because of that continue to deny events like the Holocaust or that slavery was as atrocious as we know it was. Then you are going to try and limit teachers' abilities to teach about these events and others, which will only produce more citizens who do not and will not try to understand what it is like for people who are not white or who are not heterosexual to navigate living in the U.S. Why continue this cycle of ignorance? Raoul Peck, director of *Exterminate all the Brutes* which documents the ongoing colonial legacy and legacies of white supremacy manifested throughout the US via laws and policies (such as these two), asserts that this continues to happen but that "It is not knowledge we lack." It isn't that y'all are not smart enough to understand what it is you're doing—it's that you don't care. You prefer to lord power over those who have none; you want to maintain power at any cost and that's why you continue to play to these racists within your base who are too fragile to entertain non-white and non-straight perspectives. This behavior is not very Christian-like.

You, Republican legislators, are not educators, and you are not prepared to even entertain these conversations. Your ignorance is apparent in how these bills are being put forth, making all of you irresponsible in your global citizenry. You are failing teachers and students and are continuing to derail the knowledge that is necessary to heal our society. You are essentially creating the dynamics to allow hate to continue festering in this country. The classroom is our space to be with our students and they deserve to have the whole truth about our nation's history and ongoing exclusionary tactics aimed at Americans of color and LGBTQ Americans.

Haven't you, Republican legislators, had enough of the hatred in this country? Making students more aware of the United States' racist history and how it excludes people who are not heterosexual is about awareness—we need more of that to fully understand and heal our current predicaments. Shame on you, Republican legislators, for being so close minded and for reproducing the very tenants of white supremacy in 2021. You don't have to be out there screaming with tiki torches about how "you will not be replaced," you're doing the work of white supremacy, comfortably sitting back in your chairs, marinating in your ignorance, and somehow calling it justice.

As an educator, I ask you to strongly consider my testimony opposing [HB 322 OR HB 327] and vote NO on this bill.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,
Carlos Kelly
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