

Testimony Against H.B. 327

Representatives, thank you for taking the time to read my testimony against House Bill 327. My name is Henry Tikkanen and I am a Senior majoring in History Education at Ohio Wesleyan University and I am a lifelong resident of Ohio. I am writing this to implore you to not vote to approve House Bill 327. This bill is a desperate attempt to hinder the educational process of teachers in Ohio. How will the educators of our fine state prepare students for the future if we cannot truly teach them history? Almost all of History is made up of “divisive concepts”. This is such a broad standard that it could single-handedly outlaw a massive chunk of Ohio’s Learning Standards. This could prevent schools from teaching topics like the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, Women's Suffrage, the impact that slavery had on the United States, nuclear warfare and the cold war, the civil war that occurred in America, and the war on terror. These topics are all vital to the history of the United States.

As a future educator in Ohio, this legislation has the potential to severely damage my future. If we cannot discuss these topics with our students, how will we continue to move forward as a society? History doesn't repeat itself, but it can rhyme. If we want to avoid repeating the same mistakes that those before us made we must look at history to learn from it. This is not something that can happen if we cannot discuss an accurate representation of our history in our schools. The education system is the background of Ohio. Enacting this legislation can destroy aspects of our education system and could jeopardize the future of Ohio and this country.

These proposed restrictions on our education system and educators in Ohio sicken me. Decisions about curriculum and education should be made by educators. They should not be made by people who are removed from our system with alternative motives. Please consider voting against this legislation. The future of our education system could rely on it.

My view is not unique among the people of Ohio. I am sure that I am joining thousands of concerned citizens and teachers. This worrying topic is discussed regularly by the students in my college education program. This legislation would take away our right to provide our students with an accurate education of America's history. The image of a state where this is possible is awful. Educators should present accurate information, not blatantly untrue information. If this legislation is passed, then the government of Ohio will have failed both me and all of the other educators in this state. However, more importantly perhaps, our government will have failed the United States. The people of our country are entitled to an accurate education. This legislation would make it impossible for us to provide them with one. I beg you to do the right thing and to vote against House Bill 327. Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Thank you,

-Henry Tikkanen