



**JEAN SCHMIDT
STATE REPRESENTATIVE**

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chairwoman John, Ranking Member Kelly, and Members of the House State and Local Government Committee:

Thank you for allowing my colleague and me the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 616. We want nothing more than to allow our children to be taught facts and learn the necessary information to prepare them for life, such as math and science. This bill will ensure that the classroom is a place of learning, not a place of biased, political talking points.

As my colleague has stated, this bill is simple. First, it would prohibit the teaching of divisive or inherently racist concepts from being taught. No child should fear being called “racist” because of the color of their skin or be forced into thinking that the wrongs of the past are on their shoulders.

Second, this bill aims for age-appropriate instruction as it relates to sexual orientation or gender identity. Our youngest children, especially seven, eight, or nine-year-olds, need to focus on the developing their skills and being children. They should not be focused on sexual-related matters. To be clear, this bill does not ban teaching these things. In fact, as my colleague pointed out, this instruction starts as early as the fourth grade and must be age appropriate to a child’s development.

Finally, this bill provides a pathway for parents to have an oversight in their child’s education. This bill will create a process developed by the State Board of Education to allow parents to file complaints related to what is being taught in the classroom. This process is not one-sided; teachers will have the opportunity to defend themselves before a penalty, if any, is assessed.

House Bill 616 is an important step in ensuring that our children receive the best education possible. I thank you for your time and encourage your support of the bill.

We will now answer your questions.