

Testimony for HB 171
Submitted by: Clovis Westlund
Testifying as Proponent

Chair Bird, Vice Chair Fowler Arthur, Ranking Member Robinson and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee,

My name is Clovis Westlund and I live in Columbus. I am a student at Ohio State University and an Organizing Fellow with Honesty for Ohio Education. I am asking the committee to support HB 171, which updates the Social Studies model curriculum to better reflect the histories of all Ohioans by including the migration histories, societal contributions and experiences of a range of communities in Ohio and the United States who are not currently represented in our classrooms.

I believe that passing this bill is good for Ohio and Ohio students because I know the transformative power of education. Both my Northeast Ohio K-12 public school district and my time at Ohio State have clarified my perspective, challenged my articulation, and pushed forward my thinking.

Identity-affirming public education has saved my life. When I was first moving through the school system, I was left without the language, history, and context to understand myself. I lived in an all-encompassing culture of invisibility. It was really only through teachers, who saw my struggles and supported me in making the curriculum my own, that my education first began to serve me.

House Bill 171 has the potential to make education life-giving for the diversity of students in public schools across Ohio. Please do not forget the personal revelation you experienced when the lessons of your schooling first “clicked” with you. Please do not forget the position you are in now to make this vision real for countless students in our state.

I respectfully urge the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee to consider my testimony and to vote yes in support of H.B. 171. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify in support of this legislation.