



Proponent Testimony House Bill 171  
House Primary and Secondary Education Committee House Bill 171  
Presented by Melissa Cropper, Ohio Federation of Teacher  
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Chair Bird, Vice Chair Fowler Arthur, Ranking Member Robinson, and House Primary and Secondary Education Committee members, I am Melissa Cropper, President of the Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT). OFT represents teachers in traditional and charter schools, support staff, higher education faculty and staff, social workers, library employees, and other public employees across Ohio. I am providing testimony supporting HB 171.

HB 171 would update 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 that are not currently represented in our classrooms.

Ohio has a rich history of contributions made by different cultures which can help inspire students to new heights when exposed to the successes and accomplishments of those who lived in earlier times. Including these stories of individuals who have made significant accomplishments may help students by providing role models for overcoming difficult situations. For example, Garrett A. Morgan (1877-1965) was a Cleveland inventor who invented the gas mask and the three-position traffic light. Mr. Morgan's achievements, while significant, have garnered little attention. Mr. Morgan's accomplishments have inspired others, including his granddaughter who is Director of External Affairs and Communications at Kent State University. His accomplishments and those of other African-Americans in the sciences are responsible for students of color going into the sciences and could inspire many others if we are more intentional about including their stories in the curriculum as this bill proposes.

The election of individuals of Asian, Pacific Islanders, Africans, religious faiths, represented in this chamber can inspire others to public service if their experiences are shared. Including information about individuals from different backgrounds can promote understanding in times of conflict.

H.B. 171 takes advantage of the existing curriculum review process, providing options and enriching the guidance used by our education experts to continue developing the best curriculum for Ohio's students. Curriculum is used at the discretion of local school districts so it will be up to local school districts to determine use.

OFT urges you to pass HB 171 and inspire all children to believe that they too have a path to success.

(<https://www.biography.com/inventors/garrett-morgan>)