

2/20/23

Testimony to the Education Committee regarding SB11 Backpack bill.

Respected Senators, Members of the Education Committee,

Greetings!

I express my gratitude for allowing me to testify as a proponent of the SB11 . My name is Dr Asim Farooqui. I am a Psychiatrist. Today I am representing Muslim Parental Rights Advocacy Group, MPRAG for short. This is a recently organized grass roots level initiative, representing thousands of concerned Muslim parents in Ohio who have witnessed in shock and utter dismay the radical deterioration of the Psycho-social moral landscape of our Public School System in recent times. Since majority of Muslim families in Ohio have historically sent their children to the Public School System, these changes have dire consequences not just for the future of our children's education but their moral psychosocial development. We have watched video clips of school board meetings from all across the nation from the most conservative to the most liberal states and what emerges is an image of an educational system that is fractionating our society instead of uniting, disrespecting the basic 'Moral law within' described by Kant during the Enlightenment era.

While the School syllabus is filled with sexually graphic and inappropriate books like 'Of mice and men' and 'The Night'; the school libraries are inundated with obscene, offensive and pornographic books like 'The Blankets' and 'The Sun and her flowers' which are mixed in with children's story books in the fiction section of the school libraries . When concerned parents bring evidence to school officials for not following their own policies they are literally silenced by their mics being turned off or they are sent on a wild goose chase to rewrite the policies which are then not approved by the boards. The script is essentially the same throughout the school board meetings. Our voices are being silenced and our children are being morally injured and sexualized prematurely by the public schools under the guise of social education. Moral decay is encouraged to its fullest.

Academically, several public school systems are struggling to even regain their own pre COVID era performances and have been pushing significant numbers of students to the next grade without attaining minimum proficiency levels creating a false impression of good performance. Their focus has shifted from academics to unrelated areas. ForExample: Hilliard City School District has 3,200 Muslim students comprising 20% of all students served by this district. These students bring a total funding of 48 million dollars a year to the district. In return its current grading is a dismal 6/10. There is lack of accountability about how the funds are utilized to improve academic performance and its students' proficiency rates. It seems as though the Public School System is beginning to behave like its too big to fail just like the financial institutions did in the early 2000s. We all know the tragic result of allowing it to go on.

**In such an academic environment , it has become necessary to create a healthy competition and we believe that SB11 is an intelligent answer to this growing problem. This is supported by over 2 dozen**

independent studies that show how the quality of education improved when the monopoly of public school system is challenged with competition. For those who fear our teachers will be laid off in the public school system, we say they will experience trans institutional shift and will experience better job satisfaction when their students proficiency levels increase. Such a shift should happen to challenge our academic system to improve. We fully support SB11 which will effectively accommodate the growing diverse needs of our growing diverse Ohio population. It will allow peaceful co existence of a wide spectrum of diverse population and restore unity and coherence back to our varied subpopulations.

Thank you.