

Thank you for your time today and allowing me to speak. My name is Marissa Bramble. I was one of the leaders of the various Black Lives Matter protests in Defiance, Ohio last summer. I also spent a decent amount of time educating others on systemic racism, facilitating conversation of racial injustice with community leaders and our city council. Currently I am enrolled at BGSU as a psychology and social work major. I say this so you can understand my background when it comes to racial issues in our country, not only ones I face day to day as a black woman, but what I have done to attempt to create a better America for our future generations. Redistricting has been done to manipulate elections to maintain power, which tends to disproportionately affect the minority groups. Then this allows those in power to enact educational curriculum reform to benefit those in power and change the narrative, which brings me to why I am here today. In House Bill 327 and House Bill 322 it speaks on prohibiting “divisive concepts”. Many of this stems from the protest of last summer and the push to educate others fully on racial issues. If we do not teach the topics that you claim are “divisive” we are actually continuing to divide our country. Everyone, especially our minorities deserve the right to understand how our country was made, the importance of our pivotal moments in our history that just so happen to be surrounded by racially charged and civil rights issues. Our current curriculum is “white washed” and watered down to paint America as this perfect place and that simply is not the case. As the philosopher George Santayana said “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” Our students deserve more. Our country was founded on colonization and whipping out Native Americans. Our country and economy was built on the free labor of slaves. Our country has hurt a lot of populations, minorities, children, women, lgbtq communities and our students should not have to learn about these pivotal moments in our history in their 20s. They deserve to see themselves in our curriculum. There are so many minorities that have contributed to our country positively that we do not talk about simply because they are not white. You may think these are divisive concepts, but with all of these topics you get the opportunity to show our students how our country fought to fix these issues and how we continue to try to fix and repair the issues of our past. America is not perfect. No person or country is, but to show our Nation the respect it deserves, it demands us to speak on our past that has hurt our own citizens, show how we have repaired it and continue to have the conversation to fix and repair current issues that are left over from years of oppression, suffering, and pain. Many people think critical race theory is a way to bash white people and their whiteness. That is not the case. We do not want to punish people of today for what our country did decades ago, however we cannot ignore the fact that minorities in our country are still suffering from our past. All we are asking is that we teach our students what really happened, even if the topics are difficult, so our country can heal, so we can do better for future generations, and so we do not repeat these awful things from history that we try so hard to repress.