

Opponent Testimony on House Bill 73
Ohio House Primary and Secondary Education Committee
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Rev. Alfred B. Davis
Senior Pastor, Richfield Bible Baptist Church

Good afternoon Chairwoman Manning, Vice-Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson, and Committee Members. My name is Alfred Davis. I am the pastor of the Bible Baptist Church in Richfield, Ohio, and a board member of the Ohio Christian Alliance. Thank you for the opportunity to give testimony in opposition of House Bill 73, Regards educational testing, assessment, and retention.

Our Founding Fathers were very concerned about the prospect of future generations losing sight of the reasons for which they broke away from England in order to form a new and independent country. They believed strongly that knowledge and understanding of our history is vitally important to the preservation of a free and self-governing Republic. Thomas Jefferson, for example, in a letter to William Charles Jarvis, September 28, 1820, said:

"I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education. This is the true corrective of abuses of constitutional power."

Currently, thanks to the passage of Senate Bill 165, the Founding of America Documents Curriculum, in the 129th General Assembly in 2012, Ohio public schools are required to educate and test students in grades 8-12 regarding the history and importance of our Founding Documents, namely The U.S. Constitution, The Bill of Rights, The Northwest Ordinance, The Declaration of Independence, The Ohio Constitution, the Federalist Papers, and the Anti-Federalist Papers.

Knowledge and understanding of these foundational documents are essential to build future generations of Ohioans who are properly prepared and able to function as free citizens, citizens who can safeguard the freedoms and rights secured for us by the Founding Fathers, citizens that understand who we are and what our country stands for. After all, as historian David McCullough observed, "History is who we are and why we are the way we are."

House Bill 73 may have good intentions, but it will undo the good that Senate Bill 165 has done. Thanks to the curriculum and testing mandated by Senate Bill 165, Ohio high school students have, in recent years, achieved higher proficiency test rates in American History and American Government than their counterparts in other states. However, by eliminating the end-of-course exams for American Government and American History, House Bill 73 has the potential to reverse these successes by reducing the amount of time spent in the classroom teaching Ohio's

students the importance of the great ideas and values that our founding documents encapsulate. Without the testing requirements, teachers pressed for time will gradually limit and possibly even eliminate the teaching of these important documents. Keeping the testing requirements will help to ensure that teachers spend the time necessary to ensure that Ohio's students are properly educated and prepared to function as free citizens and transmit these important ideas and values to future generations.

Therefore, I respectfully urge the Members of the Ohio House Primary and Secondary Education Committee to defeat House Bill 73, Regarding educational testing, assessment, and retention, to ensure that Ohio's students continue to be taught the value of our country and state's founding documents.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions from the Committee.