

OHIO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

HB 616 – Talking Points

Doubles-Down on “Divisive Concepts” Ban; Adds “Don’t Say Gay”

April 11, 2022

Bill Status: Introduced on April 4, 2022. Joint sponsored by Rep. Mike Loychik (R-Cortland) and Rep. Jean Schmidt (R-Loveland). No co-sponsors. Yet to be assigned to an Ohio House legislative committee (as of 4.11.22).

Summary: HB 616 doubles-down on the worst parts of Ohio HB 327, anti-freedom state censorship of ‘divisive concepts,’ by adding the worst parts of Florida’s ‘Don’t Say Gay’ bill into the new proposed language. The bill applies to school districts, charter schools, STEM schools, and private schools that enroll students in a state voucher program.

Messaging:

- **All Ohio children deserve an honest and reflective education that empowers them to become critical thinkers and future leaders.**
 - Educators and students deserve the freedom to teach and learn without fear of state censorship, intimidation, and punishment based on vague government prohibitions on speech and ideas.
- **Educators and parents – not politicians – should make decisions on education issues.**
 - Educators and parents are on the same side. Blaming educators and pointing fingers at parents to score political points divides our communities and hurts students.
- **HB 616 is vague and confusing. It will have a chilling effect on instruction and harm students.**
 - Teachers and schools will be placed in hostile conditions, afraid to teach even the most innocuous lessons for fear of license revocation or loss of state funding due to baseless accusations.
- **HB 616 will make Ohio’s teacher shortage worse.**
 - Attacking educators with legislation like HB 616 and HB 327 will make it harder to recruit and retain qualified individuals.

Scott W. DiMauro
President

Jeffrey Wensing
Vice President

Mark A. Hill
Secretary-Treasurer

Patricia Collins Murdock
Executive Director

The OEA will lead the way for continuous improvement of public education while advocating for members and the learners they serve.

225 E. Broad St., Box 2550,
Columbus, OH 43216
PHONE: (614) 228-4526
or 1-800-282-1500
FAX: (614) 228-8771

- **HB 616 is a distraction from the real issues facing our students and schools.**
 - Instead of anti-freedom state censorship laws, let's work on pro-student policies like fair funding and better access to learning opportunities for all students
- **Intrusive government overreach means more state regulations and less freedom.**
 - State censorship of speech and ideas mean less learning. Micromanagement of schools means less local control. Hostile work environments mean fewer qualified educators for students.
- **HB 616 is extremely divisive and Ohioans don't want it.**
 - Instead of intrusive government regulations and state censorship, let's support educators so they can do the jobs they were trained to do on behalf of students.
- **Let's unite around our shared future.**
 - Rather than doubling down on attacking educators and public schools, we need pro-student policies that empower all students to think critically about the world around them and to be proud of who they are.