House Bill 171 – OEA Supports

Status: Before the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee

House Bill 171, sponsored by Representative Mary Lightbody (D-Westerville), requires the State Board of Education to update the model curriculum for social studies in grades kindergarten to twelve to include age- and grade appropriate instruction in the migration journeys, experiences, and societal contributions of a range of communities in Ohio and the United States, including all of the following: (a) African American communities; (b) Asian American and Pacific Islander communities; (c) Arab, African, and North African immigrant, refugee, and asylee communities; (d) Appalachian communities; (e) Jewish communities; (f) Latin American communities; (g) Native American communities.

Message: OEA supports the favorable passage of HB 171 because all of Ohio’s students deserve a complete and honest education that truly reflects the contributions of every Ohioan to the history of our country, state, and communities.

- School is a place where children develop their understanding of the world and their ability to make meaningful change in it.

- We have faith in our kids’ ability to process new and complex information. Learning about different histories, races, and cultures gives students mirrors that reflect their own identities and windows into the world. Rather than using classrooms as political battlegrounds, let’s allow our educators to empower students and prepare them for a more global future.

- Students deserve an education that truly reflects their backgrounds and communities. HB 171 would do just that by educating students about the experiences, migration, and contributions of a range of communities that already, and in many cases, have long called Ohio home.

- An updated model curriculum would provide rich, engaging options for teaching social studies in Ohio. It will equip teachers with well-developed activities and lessons that can support and develop respect for the students in our classrooms who come from different histories than our own.

- Education is the first step to building kinder adults by teaching empathy and understanding of new and different knowledge. HB 171 seeks to foster and support empathy by reflecting all of Ohio’s communities, ensuring our students truly feel seen in their classrooms statewide.

- We fail our kids when we don’t provide them with an education that truly mirrors Ohio’s current makeup as a state. HB 171 can solve for that by educating students about the experiences, migration, and contributions of a range of communities that already, and in many cases, have long called Ohio home.