

OEA GUIDE FOR SUBMITTING OPPONENT TESTIMONY ON HB 322 AND HB 327

STEP 1 - Get on committee email list: Contact the office of the Chair of the Ohio House State and Local Government Committee and ask to be placed on the email list that receives hearing/agenda announcements for this committee. The Chair of the committee is State Representative Scott Wiggam (R-Wooster). Send your request to both the general office email Rep01@ohiohouse.gov and to his legislative aide dillon.barto@ohiohouse.gov. You may also call the office at 614-466-1474. Committee announcements are usually emailed on Thursday or Friday (and sometimes over the weekend) to indicate whether the committee plans to meet the following week. If the committee is scheduling a meeting the announcement will include an agenda listing the bill numbers receiving a hearing and what type of testimony is being accepted (i.e. Bill Sponsor, Proponent, Opponent, Interested Party/Neutral, All Testimony). In recent months the Ohio House State and Local Government Committee has been meeting on Wednesdays.

STEP 2 - Monitor the committee agenda: If you receive a committee agenda that lists HB 322 and/or HB 327 for a hearing, it will also state what kind of testimony is being accepted. If the committee is accepting either “Opponent” testimony or “All Testimony” on HB 322 and/or HB 327, this is an opportunity for you to submit “Opponent” testimony.

STEP 3 – Prepare your testimony: The testimony template below provides guidance in the preparation of your testimony document. The template is designed to address overall concerns with both HB 322 and HB 327 (the bills have similar intent but vary in their details). If both bills are on the committee agenda (the committee’s practice so far), you can submit the same testimony document for each bill (see additional guidance in STEP 4).

Additional resources:

- <https://ohea.org/actions/oppose-hb322-hb327/> The OEA website has information on HB 322 and HB 327, including additional messaging ([here](#)) and an option to send an email letter directly to your State Representative.
- <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/> The Ohio General Assembly website has background resources such as bill status, bill text, and bill analysis (use bill search feature, click on bill #, select “Documents”).
- <https://ohiohouse.gov/committees/state-and-local-government> The Ohio House State and Local Government Committee provides information on committee members and copies of testimony submitted at prior hearings (click on “Bills” then select HB 322 and HB 327).

STEP 4 – Submit testimony to the Chair’s office (complete a Witness Slip if testifying in-person): If the Ohio State and Local Government Committee has scheduled a hearing on HB 322 and/or HB 327 and is accepting “Opponent” or “All Testimony,” you have a choice to present your opponent testimony in-person at the Ohio Statehouse or to submit the testimony as written-only. In both cases your testimony document will be entered into the bill record on the committee website. Please see additional guidance below:

In-person testimony: To present your testimony in-person at the Ohio Statehouse, you must also fill out a Witness Slip ([here](#)). Email your testimony and Witness Slip to the committee chair’s office. Also indicate in your email that you wish to provide in-person testimony. Committee protocol for in-person testimony on HB 322 and/or HB 327 at prior hearings has included the following guidance:

- The Chair requests testifying parties submit testimony to his office no later than 24 hours prior to committee.

- The committee will have a hard stop after three hours and the order of testimony will be on a first come first served basis.
- First come first served means the order in which it is received via email by the Chair's office.
- You must indicate whether you are submitting written testimony or verbal testimony.
- If you want to testify on both bills using the same testimony, please indicate that on your witness slip. Your written testimony will be entered into the record for both and you will be given one speaking slot for verbal testimony. You may fill out one witness slip.
- If you want to testify on both bills using different testimony, please submit two witness slips indicating whether you are submitting written testimony or verbal testimony.
- If you want to testify on one bill, please submit one witness slip, indicate whether you are submitting written testimony or verbal testimony.
- Those testifying will be permitted up to five minutes to present and there will be no limit on the time allotted for questions.
- You may find out your place in speaking by contacting the Chair's office.
- You may request your testimony to be held for a subsequent hearing.

Written-only testimony: You may also submit your testimony as written only, which does not require a witness slip. When submitting your testimony to the chair's office, note in the email that it is written testimony and also state in the heading of your testimony that it is written-only. Your written testimony will be entered into the committee record available on the committee website.

****IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED ASSISTANCE, PLEASE CALL MATT DOTSON IN OEA GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AT 614-537-0611.****

TEMPLATE FOR PREPARING COMMITTEE TESTIMONY OPPOSING HB 322 AND HB 327

HEADING: At the top of testimony page include the heading below.

Ohio House State and Local Government Committee
HB 322 and HB 327
Opponent Testimony
[Enter your name and include a professional title if you wish.]
[Enter date of committee hearing.]
[Enter "Written-Only Testimony" if you are not presenting testimony in person.]

INTRODUCTION AND ASK: Greet the committee, introduce yourself, provide brief professional background, ask the committee to oppose the bills.

SAMPLE TEXT:

Chair Wiggam, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the Ohio House State and Local Government Committee, my name is [ENTER FULL NAME]. I am a [PROVIDE BRIEF PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND, e.g. **classroom teacher/school district/grade/subject(s)/# of years teaching**]. As an educator, I ask you to oppose HB 322 and HB 327.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION: Provide quick background on major aspects of the legislation to help put your testimony in context.

SAMPLE TEXT:

HB 322 and HB 327 would essentially prohibit teaching about or discussing so-called “divisive concepts” such as racism and sexism. The bills would be enforced with extreme penalties such as students losing course credit for graduation, teachers facing license revocation, and schools being denied state funding. HB 322 applies to K-12 schools. HB 327 applies to K-12 schools, colleges, universities, and state agencies.

RATIONALE FOR YOUR POSITION: Include paragraph(s) that discuss rationale for opposing bills.

SAMPLE MESSAGING:

Based on my experience as an educator, I ask you to oppose HB 322 and HB 327. (INSERT: In paragraph form, include points below that resonate with you, create additional points, and share any relevant professional experiences/insights that may help legislators better understand your perspective.)

- HB 322 and HB 327 are anti-freedom in the classroom. As an educator, I ask you to oppose more government regulations of our schools.
- Educators and students deserve the freedom to teach and learn without fear of state censorship, intimidation, and punishment.
- More government regulations mean less freedom. State censorship of speech and ideas mean less learning. Micromanagement of schools means less local control. Hostile work environments mean fewer teachers. In the end, Ohio’s students will suffer most.
- Instead of government regulations and censorship in the classroom, let’s trust educators to do the jobs they were trained to do on behalf of students. This includes following state learning standards and district curriculum in ways that bring students honest, accurate, and diverse learning experiences.
- Murky state censorship prohibitions with extreme penalties will create an oppressive and fear-based education environment harmful all students, educators, and schools.
- Students will be threatened with loss of graduation credit, schools with cancellation of state funding, and educators with revocation of state licenses. Both schools and educators could face financial harm with exposure to parental lawsuits with uncapped civil liability damages. Teaching could become such a risky career path that few would choose to do it, and we’re already in the midst of a teacher shortage.
- Instead of anti-freedom state censorship laws, our communities and schools need pro-student policies like fair funding and equal access to learning opportunities.
- Please protect academic freedom and honesty in education by opposing these harmful government intrusions in the classroom.

Additional messaging from an OEA messaging triangle can be viewed [here](#).

CLOSING: Express appreciation for the opportunity to provide testimony.

SAMPLE TEXT:

In closing, thank you again for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on HB 322 and HB 327. I appreciate your consideration of my perspective as an educator in Ohio’s great public schools.