



Date: March 21, 2022

To: The Honorable Robert Cupp, Speaker
Ohio House of Representatives

From: Ohio Library Council
Ohio Municipal League
Ohio Mayor's Alliance
Ohio Township Association
Ohio Parks and Recreation Association

Re: Substitute House Bill 327 Opposition

As representatives of local governments and other political subdivisions, we would like to collectively offer our opinion on Substitute House Bill (HB) 327. While we certainly agree that every person should be treated equally regardless of race, religion, sex, or other factors, we are unclear how this bill advances that goal. In our view, the inclusion of "political subdivisions" in the bill's provisions creates more uncertainty than protection in this legislation.

As with other iterations of this legislation, the language in HB 327 is vague. What it means to be "one-sided, biased, and uncritical" are subjective concepts that do not enjoy a commonly understood cultural, social, or historical definition.

The bill prohibits political subdivisions from offering teaching, instruction, or training promoting any of the concepts described in divisions (B)(1) to (8) of section 3313.6028, among other restrictions related to the generally defined concepts. The language of the legislation raises questions and concerns for our members.

For example, libraries are included in this legislation as political subdivisions. Under the parameters of HB 327, the bill may be perceived to prohibit certain materials, authors, programs, etc. that may be provided by a local library, which causes great concern. Libraries have been, and will always be, "open to all" and serve as an informational source to the public. What may be considered divisive or controversial to some may not be to others. Libraries do not advocate for or endorse the content found in their collections or in resources made accessible through the library. They simply provide access to information for everyone.

Local governments may also offer programs or trainings for their employees or members of the community that could be questioned based on an individual's perception. It is difficult for local

governments to anticipate services and programs that may run afoul of these concepts now or in the future, and ultimately may open local governments up to lawsuits.

Additionally, the bill does impose administrative requirements, which may be costly for larger political subdivisions and burdensome for smaller political subdivisions.

As organizations representing public employers or employees, we are confident that the federal and state laws currently in place protect people from discrimination or harassment in the workplace. Local governments have long been expressly prohibited from engaging in discrimination against specific groups and will continue to work to ensure that every person in every neighborhood and community can access local government services and programs.

For these reasons, we are uniformly opposed to this impractical set of standards becoming law. We respectfully request your consideration to remove political subdivisions from this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to contact us with any questions.