

Ed Singer
10345 Haller St, Defiance, OH 43512
Phone: 419-438-1916
Email: edward.g.singer@gmail.com

My name is Ed Singer. I drove an hour from my home in Defiance County to be here today because I believe that fair electoral maps, produced through a fair and open redistricting process, are vital to the future of my community and our state.

I am a retired educator, 31 years, the lead social science instructor for the Arts & Sciences Division at Northwest State Community College in Archbold. Naturally, the quality of education in Ohio is a big issue for me. Frankly, at present, I'm worried about potential impacts of new education policies coming out of Columbus. I find it disturbing to observe how the gerrymandered "safe" districts across our state have created a supermajority in the Statehouse that often appears to feel free to dismiss popular concerns in favor of an ultra-conservative ideology.

Specifically, I'm worried about HB 322 and SUB HB 327. As you know, these currently pending measures would create entire categories of "Prohibited Concepts" and allegedly "Divisive Concepts," centered on race and sex, which schools would be banned from teaching, promoting, or even advocating in grades Pre-K through 12.

While I recognize that there may be good intentions behind this proposed legislation, it smacks of censorship and has the potential to chill or halt important fact-based discussions in history courses and across the social studies curriculum. Moreover, these measures clearly target a problem that does NOT exist in most, or perhaps even ANY, schools in our state. That target is Critical Race Theory, an abstract framework that arises in some, normally elective, courses on the college level. CRT has been cited in academic readings since the beginning of my career in the higher education field, but to the best of my knowledge, it has found no place in our elementary schools. Nonetheless, it was recently seized upon by certain national politicians and media personalities as the latest "culture war" issue.

It would be a misuse of CRT to instill "guilt, anguish," or any of the evils claimed by these detractors, but as a weapon of war, it serves as a useful wedge.

It is my belief that, by introducing HB 322 and SUB HB 327, Ohio legislators have embraced this culture war. In so doing, they foist ideological talking points upon our state, but fail to enhance educational quality for our young generations. Worse yet, the true costs of slavery, racism, oppression of women, and such "Prohibited Concepts" may be swept under the rug as too controversial to mention in the classroom.

It is my great hope that when those of you on this Commission implement fair electoral maps and districts, our legislators will be less inclined to bring such divisive matters to the floor of the statehouse. They may be more inclined to listen to constituents and colleagues across the aisle,

and they may choose to avoid sensational wedge issues promoted in the national media but out of place in Ohio schools and society at large.

Hope, as we know, springs eternal.