

November 8th, 2021

Fellow Falcons,

The current legislative priorities of the Ohio House of Representatives have proven to be consistently and aggressively targeted at further disadvantaging and discriminating against marginalized peoples within the state of Ohio. Within the past year, four House Bills have openly and blatantly set a racist, sexist, and transphobic political agenda that the Undergraduate Student Government of BGSU must openly and fervently oppose as agents for public good.

House Bills 322 and 327¹

These two bills openly seek to criminalize diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in K-12 and higher education in the state of Ohio, and, if enacted, would prohibit a long list of social studies curriculum essential to fostering informed, justice-oriented citizens within our democracy. These bills would prohibit:

- School districts and state agencies requiring teaching of current events or controversial issues in social studies classrooms
- Teachers giving credit for any project which might ask students to take a stance on a political issue using evidence from credible, scholarly sources
- School districts requiring K-12 teachers and staff to affirm the reality of systemic racism and gender fluidity
- Any state agency or school district offering training or instruction on “divisive concepts” which include, but are not limited to:
 - Teaching anything except colorblind theory, or the idea that we should ignore race rather than face the consequences racial discrimination has had and continues to have on our society
 - Questioning the concept of the meritocracy (i.e. questioning the attainability of the American Dream)
 - Questioning the principles and legacies of the Founding Fathers (i.e. examining the slaveholding practices of figures like Washington and Jefferson)

Any violation of these strict, Draconian restrictions would result in a revocation of state funding from already underfunded public schools, further disadvantaging students from all backgrounds, but especially those from marginalized backgrounds who only seek to learn their history and improve equitable outcomes for all.

¹ [H.B. 322](#), [H.B. 327](#)

House Bill 454²

This bill would criminalize transgender and LGBTQ+ youth from seeking any kind of gender-affirming treatment. Within the bill, representatives spread wildly dangerous misinformation about the experience of young people who do not identify with their gender assigned at birth. If passed, the government of Ohio would expressly be dooming the physical, mental, and emotional health of young people experiencing the effects of gender dysphoria. This bill would prohibit:

- Health care providers or any medical professionals providing minors with gender-affirming hormones or puberty blockers
- Health care providers or any medical professionals providing minors with gender-affirming surgery
- K-12 staff from withholding information from a student's parents/guardians who is known or suspected to not identify with their gender assigned at birth, even if they know the student may not have a supportive home environment and might be subjected to ostracization and abuse from their family
 - This would effectively force K-12 staff to out LGBTQ+ youth to their families and potentially their communities

If any of these restrictions are violated, the medical professionals involved will be subject to discipline by any licensing boards which their profession falls under, and all state funding would be withheld from the organization which that medical professional is a part of until it is demonstrated that no gender-affirming healthcare is provided to minors.

House Bill 480³

This bill mirrors the recent Texas anti-abortion bill, widely restricting safe access to abortion procedures for people with unwanted pregnancies and providing an avenue for vigilantism against those who may seek to ensure bodily autonomy is preserved in individuals who can give birth. This bill's provisions include:

- Prohibit all abortions in the state of Ohio, with no exceptions, even for cases of rape and incest
- Allow and encourage individuals to file lawsuits seeking \$10,000 or more against anyone in Ohio who perform abortions or "knowingly engages in conduct that aids or abets the performance or inducement of an abortion," including paying for it via insurance.⁴
- Defendants in lawsuits would not be able to use the following defenses:
 - Ignorance of the law
 - Belief in the unconstitutionality of the law
 - Reliance on a court decision that could later be overruled (i.e. Roe v. Wade)

² [House Bill 454 | 134th General Assembly | Ohio House of Representatives](#)

³ [House Bill 480 | 134th General Assembly | Ohio House of Representatives](#)

⁴ [Ohio GOP lawmakers introduce Texas-style abortion ban bill - cleveland.com](#)

This bill is undeniably sexist and seeks to completely financially ruin any individual who dares to assert their bodily autonomy and not unquestioningly surrender it to the state.

The Undergraduate Student Government finds each of these bills absolutely deplorable and urges that the following actions be taken:

- BGSU shall take a firm stance denouncing the racism, sexism, and transphobia currently rampant in the Ohio House of Representatives' legislative priorities and remain committed to providing a quality education on diversity, equity, and inclusion, advocate for the needs and equitable treatment of LGBTQ+ individuals, and make resources available for individuals who may need to seek abortion services..
- Representative Haraz Ghanbari, (Phone: (614) 466-8104, Email: rep03@ohiohouse.gov) whose district encompasses BGSU, and Representative D.J. Swearingin, (Phone: (614) 644-6011, Email: rep89@ohiohouse.gov) whose district includes BGSU Firelands, must vote each of these measures down.

We understand that these recent events have come at a time that is already very tumultuous with a global pandemic. Please feel free to utilize the following resources:

BGSU Counseling Center: (419) 372-2081

Harbor Behavioral Health: (419) 352-1545

National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-8255

If you have any further questions of concerns please feel free to contact us:

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In Solidarity,

The Executive Board of the Undergraduate Student Government