

Hello Chairman Williams and the rest of the committee.

My name is Tim Collins and I'm currently studying Secondary Social Studies Education through Emporia State University. I was born and raised in Olathe and my goal is to return to live and teach there when I finish my education. I wanted to talk to you today about HB 2662, SB 363, SB 393 and some concerns I have about it.

I had many inspiring teachers in my time at Olathe schools and I wish to return in hopes of being that kind of role model for the next generation of Kansans. While I have a passion for teaching history, I've realized what's more important is for my students to learn key life skills such as critical thinking and to empathize with others.

This is why I have become concerned about the current debate around public education in our state and across the country. There has been a movement to censor what books and content are taught in our public schools. Many school board candidates across the state have run on these issues, including some in Olathe. While these bills mostly address concerns of transparency it can easily be used as a tool for this vocal minority to fight against topics that have become relevant in the modern day.

There is already significant access for parents to view what is going on in their children's classroom. They can email or call teachers directly and if teachers are being unresponsive they can also contact school administration. The students themselves should be the best first-hand account of what materials and lessons are being learned in our classrooms.

Simply having these be published online would only be unnecessary but making all of these materials published before the school year even starts would dramatically diminish the quality of their education. In my experience teachers must remain flexible in order to make their lessons fit their students' needs rather than forcing students to conform to their lessons. Teachers cannot do this if they have not even met their students yet.

We cannot afford to diminish the quality of our students' education and the discussion of relevant topics in class. Cases such as the young student in Olathe making a racist homecoming invitation show the failings of our education system and where we can improve. Ignorance is not bliss when it can have significant consequences on our students' future. I hope you will truly listen to many of my colleagues' concerns about these bills and vote accordingly.

Thank you for your time.