

## Taylor Thrush

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**From:** katherine bahls <katherine.bahls@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 21, 2021 8:25 AM  
**To:** Taylor Thrush  
**Subject:** Written Testimony Against HB 5097

To the members of the House Education Committee:

My name is Katherine Bahls. I write to you today in opposition to HB 5097. Our teachers, and students, should have the freedom to discuss history, particularly uncomfortable history.

Without an open discussion and acknowledgement of certain parts of history we lose vital parts of what made our country. The good and the bad. It should not just be about race but gender as well. It is important all history is taught or explored.

I urge the members of the committee to vote against HB 5097.

Sincerely,

Katherine Bahls  
Grand Rapids, MI

Sent from my iPhone

## Taylor Thrush

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**From:** Jerry or Janet Duggins <jerryorjanet@wpcportage.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 21, 2021 8:26 AM  
**To:** Taylor Thrush  
**Subject:** written testimony opposing HB 5097

To the members of the House Education Committee:

My name is Janet Duggins. I am a pastor and I live in Portage, MI. Over the past two years, members of my mostly white congregation have been studying and learning a great deal about the history of racism and race-based discrimination in the United States. What we have discovered – are continuing to discover - is that there is a VAST amount of this history that we did not know, largely because it was not taught to us in school or discussed in any public venue. It's important history, and it has a direct impact on our present-day reality and many of the most challenging issues facing us as a society.

We don't need less study of history; we need more. And it's especially important that students learn, and learn from, the uncomfortable parts of our history. Teachers and students should be able to discuss history freely and openly.

I am writing write to you today in opposition to HB 5097.  
I urge the members of the committee to vote against HB 5097.

Sincerely,  
Janet Duggins

Revs. Jerry and Janet Duggins  
Westminster Presbyterian Church  
1515 Helen Avenue  
Portage, Michigan 49002  
269-344-3966  
[jerryorjanet@wpcportage.org](mailto:jerryorjanet@wpcportage.org)  
[www.wpcportage.org](http://www.wpcportage.org)

## Taylor Thrush

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**From:** Chris Coash <chriscoash@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 21, 2021 8:48 AM  
**To:** Taylor Thrush  
**Subject:** Written Testimony Against HB 5097

To the members of the House Education Committee:

My name is Chris Coash. I write to you today in opposition to HB 5097. Our teachers, and students, should have the freedom to discuss history, particularly uncomfortable history.

We have not, as a country, begun to scrutinize the devastating impacts of our shared history of white supremacist enslavement, Jim Crow, redlining, segregation in schools, and our racialized carceral state. These and myriad other intentional methods of institutional violence must be studied so that their impacts may be transformed — through education and reparations — into equity and, ultimately, liberty for us all.

I urge the members of the committee to vote against HB 5097.

Sincerely,  
Chris Coash

## Taylor Thrush

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**From:** Susan Springgate <sspringgate@kalfound.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 21, 2021 8:49 AM  
**To:** Taylor Thrush  
**Subject:** Written testimony against HB 5097

To the members of the House Education Committee:

My name is Susan Springgate. I write to you today in opposition to HB 5097. Our teachers, and students, should have the freedom to discuss history, particularly uncomfortable history.

I didn't learn the true history of systems that oppress people of color until I was in my 50s. Students should learn that history in their education so they can ensure that oppressive systems aren't perpetuated in the future.

I urge the members of the committee to vote against HB 5097.

Sincerely,  
Susan Springgate

## **Taylor Thrush**

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**From:** Julie Miller <jacjam11@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 21, 2021 8:58 AM  
**To:** Taylor Thrush  
**Subject:** Written Testimony Against HB 5097

**To the Members of the House Education Committee:**

**My name is Julie Miller, and I'm a resident of Livonia, MI. I am writing to you today in opposition to HB 5097. Our teachers and students should have the freedom to discuss our nation's true history, not a whitewashed version, nor the version deemed "acceptable" by politicians.**

**Our children deserve an accurate account of history and the systemic policies and structures that evolved from our nation's past.**

**I implore the members of the committee to vote against HB 5097.**

**Sincerely,**

Julie Miller  
jacjam11@hotmail.com

## Taylor Thrush

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**From:** Kristin Rinehart-Totten <kristin.totten@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 21, 2021 9:01 AM  
**To:** Taylor Thrush  
**Subject:** Statement in Opposition to HB 5097

To the members of the House Education Committee:

My name is Kristin Rinehart Totten. I write to you today in opposition to HB 5097. Our teachers, and students, should have the freedom to discuss history, particularly uncomfortable history that manifests the truth of our journey to a more robust and healthy democracy.

I reside in Kalamazoo and have two children who are in the middle and high school at Kalamazoo Public Schools and I know that they are eager to know the truth and are well aware that our history is a story that has both good and bad, reflective of the human condition.

I am deeply concerned, as an attorney who learned about Critical Race Theory in law school, which is where it actually is taught, that we are regulating a system of thought. Critical Race Theory is thinking critically about race and how it manifests itself within systems designed to meet the needs of all Americans. We should not fear this, and how it is being depicted and distorted.

We cannot begin going down a road to limit critical thinking, especially in public schools where we are striving to raise good humans who are concerned about their community and are seeking to be productive members of our democracy.

I urge the members of the committee to vote against HB 5097.

Kristin Rinehart Totten

(269)270-1278 cell and text

kristin.totten@gmail.com (best to text if no response)

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## Taylor Thrush

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**From:** Scott Davis <scottdavis1972@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 21, 2021 9:09 AM  
**To:** Taylor Thrush  
**Subject:** Written Testimony Against HB 5097

To the members of the House Education Committee:

My name is Scott Davis. I write to you today in opposition to HB 5097. Our teachers, and students, should have the freedom to discuss history, particularly uncomfortable history.

I urge the members of the committee to vote against HB 5097.

Sincerely,

Scott Davis

## Taylor Thrush

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**From:** Angela Gross <anggross@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 21, 2021 9:24 AM  
**To:** Taylor Thrush  
**Subject:** Written Testimony Against HB 5097

To the members of the House Education Committee:

My name is Angela Gross. I write to you today in opposition to HB 5097. Our teachers, and students, should have the freedom to discuss history, particularly uncomfortable history.

I urge the members of the committee to vote against HB 5097.

Sincerely,

Angela Gross



## Taylor Thrush

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**From:** Garth Mason <garth.r.mason@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 21, 2021 9:27 AM  
**To:** Taylor Thrush  
**Subject:** Written Testimony Against HB 5097

To the members of the House Education Committee:

My name is Garth Mason. I write to you today in opposition to HB 5097. Our teachers, and students, should have the freedom to discuss history, particularly uncomfortable history.

I urge the members of the committee to vote against HB 5097.

Sincerely,  
Garth R. Mason  
Kalamazoo, MI

## Taylor Thrush

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**From:** KC F <katyfurman1@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 21, 2021 9:29 AM  
**To:** Taylor Thrush  
**Subject:** Written Testimony Against HB 5097

To the members of the House Education Committee:

My name is Katherine Furman. I write to you today in opposition to HB 5097. Our teachers and students should have the freedom to discuss history - particularly uncomfortable history. I urge the members of the committee to vote against HB 5097.

Sincerely,

Katherine Furman

## Taylor Thrush

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**From:** Ineke Way <inekew786@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 21, 2021 9:40 AM  
**To:** Taylor Thrush; Ineke Way  
**Subject:** Written testimony against HB 5097

To members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Ineke Way. I am writing in opposition to HB 509, and asking you to vote against this bill.

Teachers need to have the freedom to teach about history as it occurred, even the shameful or uncomfortable aspects of that history.

Respectfully,  
Ineke Way  
1938 Oakland Dr  
Kalamazoo 49008

## Taylor Thrush

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**From:** Katie Kolokithas <kkolokithas526@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 21, 2021 9:45 AM  
**To:** Taylor Thrush  
**Subject:** HB 5097 opposition

Good morning,

My name is Katie Kolokithas, a resident of the state of Michigan. I write to you today in opposition to HB 5097. Our teachers, and students, should have the freedom to discuss history, particularly uncomfortable history.

I trust our educators to make the appropriate decisions about what to teach and don't appreciate the government overreach that this bill represents. This bill is also not grounded in reality but rather a tool to further a culture war by the GOP.

I urge the members of the committee to vote against HB 5097.

Sincerely,

Katie Kolokithas

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Katie Kolokithas

[Kkolokithas526@gmail.com](mailto:kkolokithas526@gmail.com)  
734-730-2041

## Taylor Thrush

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**From:** Matt Kandl <mbkandl@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 21, 2021 9:55 AM  
**To:** Taylor Thrush  
**Subject:** Written Testimony Against HB 5097

To the members of the House Education Committee:

My name is Matthew Kandl. I write to you today in opposition to HB 5097. Our teachers, and students, should have the freedom to discuss history, particularly uncomfortable history.

If we are not able to learn and discuss our complicated history as a nation, we will never be able to improve as a country and heal the many wounds that still exist. Hiding pieces of our history in the hope that we can forget them is a short-sighted move that will only divide us more as a nation. The only way that our next generation will be better is if they are told the truth about the past.

I urge the members of the committee to vote against HB 5097.

Sincerely,

Matthew Kandl

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**Matt Kandl**  
Biomedical Engineering (B.E.), 2018  
Mechanical Engineering (M.E.), 2018  
Stevens Institute of Technology

## Taylor Thrush

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**From:** Christina Getachew <christinag@shopsubstance.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 21, 2021 9:58 AM  
**To:** Taylor Thrush  
**Subject:** Written Testimony Against HB 5097

To the members of the House Education Committee:

My name is Christina Getachew. I am a parent of two Michigan public highschool students. I write to you today in opposition to HB 5097. Our teachers, and students, should have the freedom to discuss history, particularly uncomfortable history. If we don't teach the mistakes of our past, then we allow them to be shrouded in a veil, and lend them a false righteousness and dignity and the power to be repeated.

I urge the members of the committee to vote against HB 5097.

Sincerely,

Christina Getachew

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Christina Getachew

## Taylor Thrush

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**From:** Melissa Smith <mel.cheslak.smith@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 21, 2021 10:04 AM  
**To:** Taylor Thrush  
**Subject:** I urge the members of the committee to vote against HB 5097

To the members of the House Education Committee:

My name is (your name). I write to you today in opposition to HB 5097. Our teachers, and students, should have the freedom to discuss history, particularly uncomfortable history.

As a 50-year-old woman who was educated in this country, it is a travesty that I am just now learning the facts about our country's history of racism including, but not limited to, such events as the Tulsa massacre. Not to mention the true facts around historical events that were completely whitewashed for my consumption.

We have not, as a country, begun to scrutinize the devastating impacts of our shared history of white supremacist enslavement, Jim Crow, redlining, segregation in schools, and our racialized carceral state. These and myriad other intentional methods of institutional violence must be studied so that their impacts may be transformed — through education and reparations — into equity and, ultimately, liberty and justice for all.

I urge the members of the committee to vote against HB 5097.

Sincerely,

Melissa Smith  
Resident, Grosse Pointe Park

## Taylor Thrush

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**From:** johannamaddengross <jmaddengross@charter.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 21, 2021 10:06 AM  
**To:** Taylor Thrush  
**Subject:** Written Testimony Against HB 5097

To the members of the House Education Committee:

My name is Johanna Gross and I write to you today in opposition to HB 5097. Like so many others I know, so many others in this great nation, I strongly believe that our teachers, and students, should have the freedom to discuss history, particularly uncomfortable history.

I am a voter and a busy, single parent who owns her own business. I have very little time to respond to even a well-meaning friend's text, let alone take time out of my morning to compose an email to a government official who may very well never read it. Please know I say this simply to send home how critically important I feel this is. I believe no nation - no adult, really - is without some deep regrets, some things which they can, if they are wise, stand to learn and grow from. The United States is no different. We, as a people, need to be educated on the true history of this country - the good and the tragic. It does a grave disservice to us all now if we don't. We insult those whose ancestors were tortured as slaves and we insult ourselves, our children, if we act as though we can not handle these hard truths and, inevitably, grow from them. It won't be easy - the important things rarely are - but our children can emerge from their school years informed and wise and compassionate members of society.

In closing/summary, I urge the members of the committee to vote against HB 5097.

Thank you for your time and service.

Sincerely,

Johanna Madden Gross  
Kalamazoo, MI



## Taylor Thrush

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**From:** Lucky Sparkman <alleysaltz@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 21, 2021 10:12 AM  
**To:** Taylor Thrush  
**Subject:** Written Testimony Against HB 5097 To the members of the House Education Committee

Hello,

My name is Allison Sparkman. I write to you today in opposition to HB 5097. Our teachers and students should have the freedom to discuss history, particularly uncomfortable history.

I don't believe that it is the role of the government or the state or local school board, to determine how to teach the history of this country. Despite being a white citizen of a "sundown" town (Livonia) that previously gained notoriety for being "the whitest city in America," I believe it's vitally important to teach our children about the legacy of systemic forces at play in creating the inequity that still persists between whites and persons of color, no matter their national or ethnic origin. We will never overcome racism through colorblindness or denial. We will only overcome it when we choose to confront it and dismantle it. The first step is ALWAYS education.

I urge the members of the committee to vote against HB 5097.

Sincerely,  
Allison Sparkman

## Taylor Thrush

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**From:** Jillian Schubert Edwards <jrschube@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 21, 2021 10:13 AM  
**To:** Taylor Thrush  
**Subject:** Written Testimony Against HB 5097

To the members of the House Education Committee:

My name is Jillian Edwards. I write to you today in opposition to HB 5097. Our teachers, and students, should have the freedom to discuss history, particularly uncomfortable history.

I urge the members of the committee to vote against HB 5097.

Sincerely,

Jillian Edwards