

ICPE Testimony on HB 1400 – Senate Education Committee

March 27, 2019

My name is Joel Hand representing the Indiana Coalition for Public Education, a bi-partisan, grass-roots advocacy group that supports preservation of public schools and the funding that supports them.

Today, we rise in opposition to a portion of HB 1400. We believe that public schools are the backbone of our society and our representative democracy. It was Thomas Jefferson who said, “An educated citizenry is a vital requisite for our survival as a free people” and we could not agree more. Unfortunately, we believe that a portion of HB 1400 threatens our democracy. While consideration of some deregulation of public schools may be a good and healthy thing, we believe there are some requirements for public schools that should be sacrosanct, particularly those that help our public schools to strengthen our democracy. Specifically, I would point to pages 5 & 6 of the bill. This portion of the bill would require the interim study committee on education to consider the “elimination, reduction or streamlining” of the following mandates for public schools in 2022:

IC 20-30-5-0.5 – display of the US Flag and the Pledge of Allegiance

IC 20-30-5-1 – study of constitutions

IC 20-30-5-2 – study of constitutions as an interdisciplinary course

IC 20-30-5-4 – observance of moments of silence

IC 20-30-5-5 – morals instruction

IC 20-30-5-6 – good citizenship instruction AND

IC 20-30-5-22 – Indiana studies. (Page 6)

We believe that these mandates should be considered by this General Assembly as so important and so fundamental to the underlying purpose of public education that there is no reason to even study their possible elimination as a mandate.

Finally, we further see that the premise of HB 1400 is subject for inclusion within the responsibilities of the Education Task Force (hopefully composed at least in part, of those who are public education professionals) which would be created by SB 546 from Sen. Spartz which this body already passed and which was heard in the House Ed committee this morning. It is our position that consideration of these deregulation efforts would be more efficient and allow for a more in-depth analysis than what can be accomplished in successive interim study committees over 5 years.

With that I now stand ready for any questions. Thank you.