

**TESTIMONY OF
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My name is Jeff Hollier and it is my privilege to submit testimony before the Labor Relations Committee regarding House Bill 2626. I am a Cognitive Scientist with a Ph.D. in Cognitive Psychology specializing in human learning and memory. I have been a faculty member at the University of Virginia with a secondary teaching appointment in the Psychology Department and where I served as interim director of the Cognitive Science Program. My primary responsibility was to consult with faculty and departments on the development of education policy and curricular development and to teach professors how to teach with modern teaching methods and materials. My current appointment is Director of Neurosurgical Education in the Department of Neurosurgery at Milton S. Hershey Medical Center/Penn State College of Medicine. It is my responsibility to oversee the development and evaluation of all teaching and learning activities the department implements in the training of our residents on their path to become academic neurosurgeons. I speak to you today as a private citizen.

I have no formal training in religion, and yet as a layman I teach an adult Sunday-School class and serve as a Deacon elected by the congregation at Open Door Bible Church. I have no doubt that should the need arise, the congregation would have no problem with me standing in for the pastor some Sunday morning or evening. These duties have religious implications and yet I am not a member of the clergy.

The conclusion of my testimony is that from a curricular point of view, the entire staff at a Christian school is part of the religious mission of the institution and cannot be separated from that mission even in their duties as instructors of secular knowledge, custodian or groundskeeper.

It is impossible to discuss any teaching system without an appreciation for what is being taught. Rarely is the object of education a simple set of facts, but rather it is those facts coupled with a way of thinking about those facts: a mindset. Allow me to illustrate this with an example from medical education which is what I do for a living. There are medical schools that focus on producing doctors who only provide medical care. There are other medical schools that focus on producing academic doctors who not only provide care, but also perform research to advance the field of medicine. Penn State Hershey is one of the latter. Academic medicine is learned with an appreciation for research and the unique way of thinking that it entails. Even clinical problems are approached within that mindset. We would never consider hiring a faculty member to teach our residents who was not themselves involved in research because it is impossible to teach this mindset unless one has it.

Applying the same analysis to Christian schools requires us to first identify what is being taught before we can address the best way to teach it. Christian schools teach more than reading, writing and arithmetic. They also teach how to think about this material from the mindset of a Bible-believing Christian and how to implement Christian doctrine into daily life and social relationships. In other words, a Christian school provides "religious instruction" AND "education in a religious context". That context embodies the core essence of religious education: secular knowledge understood not in opposition to, but in harmony with Christian beliefs. With that understanding of what is being taught in Christian education, instructors at these institutions cannot be characterized as secular. They have as much responsibility for religious instruction as for secular instruction. The most prevalent models of teaching Christian living in Christian schools are direct instruction, modeling, shaping, and contextualizing. Direct instruction is simply the exposition of doctrinal truths and their implications. This requires knowledge of doctrine for instruction in doctrine. Modeling requires the members of the educational community to instruct by example. This is not limited to the instructors. Every adult member of a fundamental Christian school from the janitor to the groundskeeper to the teacher to the principal is expected to exhibit biblical Christian behavior for the students to observe. This is not something that can be "put on" at the school door. This is modeling how trust in God's Word affects how you live, the decisions you make and the behaviors you choose. Shaping is a process of identifying small progress toward or away from a goal and rewarding or discouraging

such behavior. An intimate familiarity with doctrine is necessary to recognize such small behavior change. Contextualization means that information and behavior are always placed in a greater context for assessment and integration, the specific context being the Christian life and belief structure described in the New Testament.

All of these instructional methods have implications for instructors' knowledge and also for their mindset. To be effective, the instructor must be operating from an intimate knowledge and acceptance of doctrinal faith and internalized belief. Furthermore, they have great implications for their behavior, and the scope of their behavior that is germane to their fitness as instructors.

As I mentioned previously, a medical school has reason to examine more than just knowledge of medicine in their personnel decisions. In the case of an academic medical center, research activity is relevant to the fitness of an instructor. However, there is a boundary to the relevancy of behavior that ends at the medical center doors, for the most part. The medical center should not concern itself with issues of sin outside working hours, for example. However, since personal testimony and living a faithful Christian life have been identified as part of the educational mission of the Christian school, the Christian school does have a reason to concern itself with issues of sin outside of working hours. Personal behavior has direct ramifications for the ability of a teacher to support that teaching mission. Further, the Bible specifies how that behavior is supposed to be handled among Christians. To preclude the free exercise of that remedy in the manner that HB 2626 proposes is to prevent the free exercise of religion. It also destroys the ability of the school to model biblically appropriate behavior, which is the teaching goal of the institution. This applies to all issues of self-governance: salary decisions, hiring, assessment of gifts, termination, etc. All of these interactions of the staff with the administration are governed by the tenets of fundamental Christian faith.

Characterization of non-clergy staff as secular is also inappropriate from the standpoint of the religious aspect inherent in some of their duties: Christian disciplinary practice, socialization, living testimony, Christian counseling and witnessing, and interpretation of science and philosophy in a biblical context. Defining away the doctrinal requirements of the non-clergy is antithetical to the concept of Christian education which is the establishment of an educational

environment for the demonstration of biblical living and thinking. The biblical requirement is for the elder Christians to instruct the younger, and this is not restricted to clergy (e.g., Titus 2).

Remember, the educational mission is two-fold: religious instruction, and education in the context of doctrine. Learning theory suggests that contextualization is very important and the value of the message is directly related to the credibility of the messenger. Socialization led by adults modeling appropriate behavior and perspective is impossible by those with a different mindset. Mindset so influences perception, that adults from a different belief system may not even be able to effectively identify behavior to be disciplined or lead guided discovery exercises. Guided discovery relies heavily on identification and feedback to direct future actions. If HB 2626 is allowed to redefine non-clergy staff as secular, the ability of the religious school to fulfill its educational mission is not only undermined but made impossible.