

**Camp American
Officers and
Staff**



Camp American

Where God's Truth and Patriotism Go Hand-in-Hand

4635 Southcrest Drive Louisville KY 40215

Internet: www.campamerican.com Phone 614-893-5986

e-mail: director@campamerican.com

Charles Michaelis
*Executive Director,
Instructor*

Noelle Dielman
Program Director

Matt Dielman
*Treasurer, Director
of Camp Security,
Camp Quartermaster*

Marilyn Norton
*Secretary,
Executive Staff
Comfort Director*

William Hill
*Activities Director,
Instructor*

Joan Hill
*Camp Office
Manager*

Chairman Stebelton and members of the House Education Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today on Senate Bill 165, legislation that will require the alteration of state curriculum to include requirements to teach founding documents in their original contexts. My name is Charles Michaelis, and I am a small business owner, a member of the board of directors of the Institute for Principled Policy and executive director of Camp American. I have over 40 years of experience in studying US and constitutional history and I have taught workshops to both teenagers and adults on the US constitution for the last 12 years. I have recently finished co-teaching a 12 week course on the Constitution, the history of the founding era (1492-1792) and world views of the founders to adults. I have also recently been involved in a research project in which corresponding Federalist/Anti-Federalist documents are evaluated and their arguments and underlying philosophies compared and contrasted.

My professional background is as a biochemist and I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Biochemistry. My work experience includes several laboratory positions over a 10 year period in both research and production settings dealing mostly with foods and beverages. My current business is as the president of Rocky Fork Formulas, Inc., a company which designs and distributes dietary supplements.

I support Senate Bill 165 because I have noted a decided lack of knowledge of the context of the history of the United States, its founders and the documents they read and wrote in the children and adults both young and old that I teach. I have been saddened to note that these individuals usually have little or no knowledge of the who's, where's, why's, how's and the beliefs of the men and women who have come before us and have shaped our present by their actions as we now shape our descendants futures by ours. They are also woefully ignorant of the Constitution, Declaration of Independence, and other founding documents.

The philosopher George Santayana said "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." My concern is that neglecting or ignoring our duty to teach our children about the history and the documents from which our constitutionally limited representative republic and consequently our individual liberty are derived leave them with no standard by which to compare our culture and how it is changing, for both good and bad. When a crisis of government arrives how is an electorate ignorant of what its founding documents say and the circumstances under which they were written supposed to make informed decisions regarding the merits, let alone the legality, of the proposed solutions? An electorate having no knowledge of what its governing principles are or what they mean is not worthy of the title. It has been made into nothing more or less than an easily manipulated mob, making decisions on the basis of emotional appeals and the changing tide of public opinion rather than the bedrock foundation of law.

One doesn't have to go far back into history to see this in action. A comparison of the French Revolution with the American struggle for independence reveals the glaring

contrast. The American electorate managed to oust a tyrannical king without going through the horrors of the anarchistic Terror of the French Revolution. The Terror was followed by a despotism brought on by a largely uneducated French mob and the small cliques of ruthless educated revolutionaries who manipulated the ignorance of the mob to violence. How are we to avoid a similar fate as the French if only a select few have any knowledge of how government is supposed to operate and why? The founders of the United States as an independent republic understood that we could not maintain our liberty in the absence of a historically and philosophically educated electorate and worked diligently to make certain that the Constitution, Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, Northwest Ordinance, Bill of Rights and other pivotal documents remained part of any educational curriculum. And while the Federalist/Anti-Federalist papers are not founding documents *per se*, they are incredibly important documents for study regarding constitutional interpretation and understanding why there is a Bill of Rights.

The requirements of SB 165 are not just important but absolutely necessary to the education of our children because we must provide proper historical perspective and a working knowledge of the documents which constitute the highest law of our land to understand our past, our present, and how these will affect our future. The effects of our current educational policies regarding the teaching of our foundational documents will be, and I would argue already are, devastating to honest debate on the issues which effect each of us and our children as individuals and as citizens.

I ask that you pass this bill. Thank you.