

Good Afternoon,

I really appreciate being invited to testify and offer my experience and perspective as a student for the FORUM Act. My name is Elle Lamb. I am a Junior at The Ohio State University and founding chair of the Young Americans for Freedom chapter, an organization that advocates for the ideas of free speech, free enterprise, limited government and individual freedom. We are an activism based organization, hosting many events on campus to let students hear what conservative ideas are really about, not through the bias perspective of their liberal professors, peers and media.

College administrators routinely try to reduce the impact of or even shut down our events using a variety of tactics. For example, the Biased Assessment Response Team, known as BART, has an anonymous reporting tool for students to report incidents of bias. We have had several reports concerning our chapter and administrators have tried to use these reports as a way to investigate and pressure us into conducting our organization by their politically correct standards.

Tonight YAF at Ohio State will be hosting its largest event yet. Ben Shapiro is one of the only conservative speakers that has been brought to OSU and by far the largest. Administrators have tried every tactic in the book, from stalling for 4 months on confirming a space on campus, denying us funding and increasing security fees. When it takes over 5 months to be able to get a speaker, it is no wonder no one else has brought speakers like Katie Pavlich and Ben Shapiro to campus, but have overwhelmingly had liberal speakers like Angela Davis, Chelsea Handler and many more.

Intellectual diversity and debate should be championed by colleges and universities all over Ohio. Yet we have seen that isn't always the case. Whether administrators are shutting us down simply because they don't agree with our ideas or because they are afraid of the leftists mobs

who often try to disrupt our events, this FORUM Act will protect all students' rights to have their voices be heard.

We are a country that is experiencing a time of deep divisiveness and polarization. How will we ever find common ground and learn where we agree if the opinions of some students are being suppressed? College is where students discover their own unique ideology and for that to happen, they need to be exposed to diverse variety of thoughts and opinions. Universities are doing a disservice to our future by preventing students from being able to hear a variety of opinions and discouraging open dialog between students by blocking speakers and events on campus. Forming Open and Robust University Minds Act will prevent universities from continuing the same echo-chamber of one sided perspectives. The thing that I would like to impress the most is tickets for Ben Shapiro sold out in less than 4 minutes with over 5,000 people viewing the event page. I don't know the opinions of those wanting to come, but I do know that students want to see Ben Shapiro come and speak.