

Good morning, my name is Madison Belletti. I am a Rising Senior at the University of Cincinnati, the President of the University of Cincinnati College Republicans, the Communications Director for Rising Republicans of Hamilton County and the Greater Cincinnati area, and the Treasurer of the Ohio College Republican Federation, otherwise known as the OCRF.

I would like to thank Representative Demetriou for inviting me to speak today on behalf of the OCRF. As the President of the College Republican Chapter at one of if not the most politically partisan and discriminatory universities in Ohio, this bill is vital to ensuring diversity of perspectives is protected on college campuses. I believe that the purpose of higher education is to teach students how to think, to develop their understanding of the world, and to prepare them for future employment as productive, contributing members of society. Unfortunately, at this time in collegiate history, our public institutions are failing to adequately prepare our students.

This bill would make significant and important changes to a campus culture that actively diminishes and silences any perspective that does not align with their institution's narrow view of political correctness. By making DEI lectures and orientation

voluntary, prohibiting the censorship of dissenting opinions, and discouraging blatant partisanship in the classroom, I believe the discrimination of conservatives and independent thinkers would be greatly diminished. Furthermore, this change in culture would be to the benefit of all students. But these changes would not be enough, and a large portion of the blame can be placed at the feet of professors and the administration of these universities.

Between my own personal experience in college and the stories I hear from other students on campus, extreme partisanship is pervasive, and it normally entirely falls on the left side of the aisle. Students at UC's campus have had to endure lectures on the "Evils of the Republican Party", forced DEI projects that divide students based on race, ethnicity, and gender, and curriculums that only give credence to one perspective on an issue. This promotion of blatant partisanship by the professors on campus creates an intolerant and closed-minded student body. And for those students that have an informed difference of opinion, they are silenced out of fear of their grade being penalized, losing friends, or literally being accosted on campus. Every single one of these experiences has happened to me personally, as well as other students being targeted on campus. Students should be taught how to think, not what to think. When professors and the administration are allowed to push one

perspective onto students without fear of consequences or public scrutiny, students receive a subpar education, a culture of bullying is created, and innovative ideas are squashed.

Under the current rule of law in public universities, professors cannot be held accountable for their actions in the classroom or their results as an instructor. This is largely because of tenure, a complete lack of interest in student feedback, and little to no transparency on the content that they teach. Tenure without review has granted professors a cloak of invincibility, and the results speak for themselves. Students are given course evaluations, and all of us know that nothing we say will have any bearing on the outcomes of our instruction or the education of future students. It is true that students can consult third-party websites when selecting classes, such as RateMyProfessor, but this is not enough. Resources like RateMyProfessor are helpful for determining which professors to avoid, but many courses are only taught by one professor. And regardless, these professors are not held accountable for their shortcomings. In addition to accountability in teaching, professors are allowed to withhold access to a syllabus until the first day of class, and in my experience, the syllabus has been withheld for several days even after the class started.

The syllabi of professors are not only unknown to students before they take a course but to the parents who oftentimes do not realize the indoctrination their child is receiving. I believe the measures proposed in this bill to review tenure, take into account student evaluations and make syllabi public will be critical to reforming higher education. Students and parents are paying and trusting these universities to further their intellectual and human development, and we deserve the confidence that we are receiving exactly that. Furthermore, given that these universities are funded through public funds, every tax-paying individual in Ohio deserves the peace of mind that their hard-earned wages are being used to promote the best education possible.

I love my university, and I am proud Bearcat. I want all students to have the best experience possible and to receive all of the opportunities that my college has given me. My job as President of the University of Cincinnati College Republicans is to ensure my members are allowed to express themselves without fear and to foster their personal development. My university is an amazing place, and I have testified today to grow and strengthen my Bearcat community as well as all students in the Buckeye state.

Thank you for allowing me to speak today, and I look forward to your questions.

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