

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Miller and members of the Higher Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on House Bill 151.

My name is Roksalana Antonyuk and I am here to testify in support of this bill based on my own experience as a student and for the sake of my future career as an educator. This legislation is needed to ensure universities are free of bias and that students with minority viewpoints are not discriminated against.

As a fourth year student at Capital University, I have had the chance to experience how higher education focuses primarily on indoctrination rather than education. I went to school thinking I would learn how to think critically and have my own views challenged, but instead we were taught to accept ideas uncritically that were favored by faculty. I learned quickly that the universities values of equality and tolerance did not apply to students whose beliefs don't align with their own.

As a student, I have faced discrimination from both faculty and other students for my beliefs. In one of my classes, a group of students had created a group chat called "the con crackheads," to make fun of students with conservative values. One of the group members even texted me directly, claiming I was ignorant, homophobic, and fascist, all blatantly untrue. Yet this is the intellectual climate that has been made by colleges, where it is okay for some students with different values to be harassed.

This culture of intellectual intolerance and one-way thinking that some students express is reinforced by professors as well. Oftentimes, Professors will use class time to get on their soap box and complain about groups and religions they don't like. During my third year of college, I had a professor who constantly talked negatively about evangelicalism, and implied that all evangelical institutions were created to promote racism and discrimination. All the lectures were biased and the instructor was condescending. During that same year, I had another teacher who told us who to vote for and if we are republican that we are an abomination. This professor, for 25 minutes talked about politics in a biology class while talking down to many students and not caring.

Last semester when the abortion laws changed, a professor decided to organize a pro-choice event that raised money and awareness. Students were made to understand there could be consequences if they did not show up, and those that did not show up were mocked by the rest of the class for their sincerely held religious views. Of course, the professor who organized the event did nothing to stop this discrimination and seemed to be actively encouraging it.

In closing, my experience in the classroom shows how routine it is for students in the minority to be mocked, ridiculed and discriminated against for their views. Myself and my peers just don't feel comfortable taking part in class discussions for fear our grades will be impacted or that we will be lectured and humiliated by the professor or other students in a biased classroom.

I hope my testimony makes clear the need for change in higher education. Please vote yes on House Bill 151 to re-establish intellectual diversity and freedom of expression on college campuses.