

**Opposition Testimony for H.B. 151
House Higher Education Committee
Wednesday, May 17, 2023
Joshua Ferry
Student at Cleveland State University
The Ohio Student Association**

Chair Young, Ranking member Miller, and members of the committee

Thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony and perspective on this bill. My name is Joshua Ferry.

I am a student at Cleveland State and a resident of Lakewood. I'm also a member of the Ohio Student Association, a nonpartisan, statewide and grassroots organization led by college students across the state of Ohio.

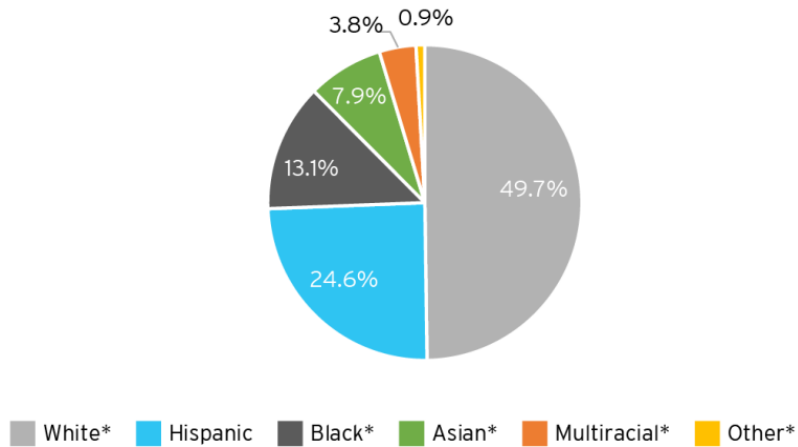
On behalf of OSA, I am here in opposition of House Bill 151.

I'm writing in opposition to this bill because the material contained in it would do more harm than good when it comes to diversity in education

1). This bill is a threat to diversity. This includes the ban of a number of programs and courses related to diversity, such as the banning of DEI (diversity, equity, inclusion) training, programs based on race and gender, topics that may be considered "controversial" related to race, sex, gender, and gender identity, academic relationships with China, and employee strikes. In a society that is growing to be more diverse, we do not deserve to turn the clocks back.

This can be backed up by research: A 2018 study from the Brookings Institute projects that by 2045, the United States will be a minority-majority country (see graph below). While there will still be more whites compared to the other racial group, when added up the non-white groups account for 50.3%, just over half.

Racial profile of U.S. population, 2045



To prepare for this more diverse union, we need to allow for more diversity training that will allow different races to be able to build better relationships with those that might feel suppressed.

2). This bill is a threat to professors.

This bill will mandate so-called “intellectual diversity” rubrics, which push an agenda that is colorblind in its ideology and one that everybody must follow. It will also mandate a US course on government. While everybody should take a basic government class, the course material should be as neutral as possible, and it should let students decide their own ideology.

3). This bill is a threat to students

This might be the group that gets harmed the most.

Students will be affected most by restrictions both inside the classroom, such as what you can and cannot talk about, and outside of the classroom, such as diversity programs.

Think of all the students who suffer from depression, anxiety, and other mental (and physical) health issues: for many, these programs are their only escape. A study conducted at Ohio State found that between August of 2020 and April of 2021, there was a rise in depression, anxiety,

and burnout among students. In addition, there was a rise in use of substances such as alcohol and vape products, a decrease in physical activity and an increase in seeking counselors. By restricting the extracurriculars that one can participate in, this will only make depression, anxiety, and other mental health disorders skyrocket.

The bills you consider and pass today, as well as the ones that the governor will affect incoming generations: Gen. Z, Millennials, and all the generations to come.

Before considering this bill, please consider this: visit college campuses—whether that be Ohio State or Cleveland State—and ask students and professors how they feel about these.

After reading this I hope this testimony gives you a different perspective on this bill.

Thank you for your consideration,

Joshua Ferry

If you have any followup questions, please contact me at Joshf0904@gmail.com,

I'm willing to answer any followup questions you may have

To read more and the studies from the Brookings Institute and Ohio State, please visit

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2018/03/14/the-us-will-become-minority-white-in-2045-census-projects/>

<https://wexnermedical.osu.edu/mediaroom/pressreleaselisting/survey-anxiety-depression-burnout-rising-among-college-students>