

May 15, 2023

Testimony in *Opposition* to HB 151

As a special education teacher and a candidate for a Master of Curriculum and Instruction from Cleveland State University, I am strongly opposed to House Bill 151, the “*Ohio Higher Education Enhancement Act*.” HB 151 would destroy, not enhance, higher education as we currently know it in Ohio.

HB 151 creates unnecessary and unconstitutional burdens on Ohio’s colleges and universities. The additional bureaucracy created by the mandated reporting steals time that faculty and administration should be devoting to improving outcomes for students. HB 151’s ban on affinity groups, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training, and “controversial topics” violates the First Amendment. Ohio’s students do not need protection from “dangerous” faculty and teachers who hold divergent views. In fact, students in Ohio are served better when we are given challenging topics and the freedom to form our own opinions. We cannot exercise that right if our professors are muzzled.

The restrictions on academic relationships with China or on Chinese students are xenophobic. It is shameful that some Ohio lawmakers are suggesting bans based on a country of origin. Losing the ability to have legitimate partnerships with the second most powerful economy in the world would be a major hit to Ohio’s economy. Ohio should be pursuing diverse partnerships, not isolating itself.

HB 151 has terrible ramifications for employees of colleges and universities. Ohio will not be able to attract the best professors if it affords them so little respect, freedom, and opportunity. Employees, including professors, should have the right to bargain collectively. Depriving them of this right is undemocratic.

The best course of action would be to reject HB 151 and give Ohio’s colleges and universities the freedom and respect they deserve.

Sincerely,
Anne Miano