

Testimony of Mary Beth Naim, Third Act Ohio  
Before the House Higher Education Committee  
Rep. Tom Young, Chair  
Wednesday May 17, 2023

Chair Young, Ranking Member Miller, and Members of the Higher Education Committee: My name is Mary Beth Naim, and I am submitting testimony as a member of Third Act – Ohio in opposition to Substitute House Bill 151.

Our education systems, particularly higher education, are critical to the future advancement of society. We should strive to ensure their continued focus on developing the knowledge and skills students need to reach their full potential while equipping them to contribute to the needs and issues facing our communities, cities, states, countries and the world today.

Ohio House Bill 151, Ohio Higher Education Enhancement Act, does much harm to our institutions. As a member of Third Act Ohio, an organization of Americans over the age of 60 who are committed to protecting democracy and fighting climate change, I'd like to focus on just two of the problematic requirements, the listing of climate change as a controversial belief or policy and prohibition on disinvestments.

Just last month the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published The Synthesis Report, the final instalment of the sixth assessment report. This 8-year long effort completed by 782 selected volunteer experts from 90 countries, involved reviewing thousands of scientific, technical and soci-economic literatures related to climate change science, its impacts, risk and adaptations and mitigation strategies. Their findings were extremely clear: human-induced global warming of 1.1 degrees C has already caused unprecedented changes in recent human history to the Earth's climate and future risks will continue to rapidly escalate with every fraction of a degree of warming. The only true controversy related to climate change is to imply that there is alternate science to these extensively vetted findings.

The IPCC report also made it abundantly clear that the world must rapidly shift away from the number one cause of climate change, the burning of fossil fuels. Disinvestment from banks and investment firms that fund new fossil-fuel projects makes sense from both a financial and environmental perspective. Financially, these fossil-fuels are destined to become stranded assets as increased global regulations and a ground-swell of citizens, insist these fossil fuels stay in the ground. From an environmental perspective, it is ludicrous to support the funding of our own destruction.

In closing, I respectfully ask that you consider my testimony and vote No on this misleading and harmful bill.