

Chairperson Young, Ranking Member Abdullahi and members of the House Higher Education Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to submit opponent testimony on HB151.

My name is Wahinya and I will be starting my masters degree in political science at Kent State this coming fall. Along with that, I am also a graduate of The Ohio State University where I majored in history and minored in classics. Throughout my undergraduate experience as a history major, I was confronted with many views pertaining to many different topics. Never once in any classroom instruction, or discussion with faculty did I ever see or feel a need to self-censor my speech. And never once did I see a faculty member reprimand anyone for pushing back on specific topics at hand during classroom instruction.

I believe that this committee's purported intentions are at best unnecessary and at worst potentially harmful. And I mean harmful in terms of the chilling effect that could sweep up both faculty and students. Because although this bill claims to support the sponsorship of "intellectual diversity" on campus, I believe it could chill discussions of certain topics in classrooms across the state. And that's not because the bill outright bans these discussions. But through the fear of mandated evaluations where a professor would be evaluated by students based on if they created a "classroom atmosphere free from political, racial, gender, and religious bias", some professors may feel the need to stray from certain discussion topics as a means of alleviating the likelihood that a student would feel uncomfortable with presented facts. In many of my history courses we dealt with a lot of hard history that reflected on the effects of political and racial strife on society. These were discussions based on primary and secondary sources used by researchers across the field of history.

Save for Central Ohio, Ohio as a whole is already in the throngs of losing population. And Universities across the country are all dealing with falling admissions rates. Instead of addressing more pressing issues such as the cost of education or pathways to work and job opportunities after graduation, this legislature and committee are more intent on micromanaging the very educational institutions that could