

Members of the Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Maylee. I am a student of Columbus State Community College and a long time Human Rights activist. I am strongly opposed to HB151, Sub 83.

This revision of this bill is unconstitutional and racist. As an American who grew up in NYC, I can attest that most of my history education was American/ Western History. I would practically beg the teachers to extend the word history lesson, so it was not just the Alamo and Civil War. The reality is most K-12 courses are being taught information to pass standardized tests. College is the few institutions that students have the control to learn what they want. If college students pay to be in a class, they pay to have everything presented to them. The average student loan debt in this country is between 20,000 to 24,000. We did not take out student loans to not get the full information on a topic. I truly see a future where young people leave Ohio in masses to achieve true higher education.

I hope soon, we are mature enough to never tolerate xenophobia in bills created for the people. During the COVID shut down, I have seen so many of my local Asian-American shops closed with signs saying, "Closed until COVID is over" or "Closed because of harassment". This is unacceptable behavior; however, how can we trust our government to stand up against hate crimes? Why are we ostracizing the culture that originated in a country with 1.4 billion people? Just like America, the government does not always share the same values and ideals of its citizens. This country was built on the backs of immigrants. We would not have the same unique experiences or rich culture without the blend of immigrants that came here because they wanted better for themselves and their families. Every day, we take advantage of our Tex-Mex and Iced "chai" tea. The people who want to regulate what is being taught about China, are the same people who want what we bring without the people. They do not want us to be appreciated or celebrated.

My next concern is the option to opt out of diversity and equality training. In the bill, it loosely states that we should use a colorblind approach instead. Since there are many vague conditions, I question what would happen if someone in the BIPOC community committed a hate crime. Would it be considered a hate crime? If we are colorblind would this act just be meaningless bullying that gives the bigot a mild reprimand? I remember during the shutdown that many closeted bigots were exposed and were either fired from their jobs, kicked out of school, or lost any opportunity. If we had an option to avoid an hour seminar on how to be a decent person, would the perpetrator use that as their defense to get a lighter punishment? This is not about freedom to opt out of a training, this can go down a dangerous road where microaggressions are just ignorance and hate crimes are just disagreements. To ignore color is a privilege, I cannot ignore that I look different. I cannot ignore the constant casual racism in my day-to-day life. I cannot ignore my harsh reality to make others comfortable because I can never be comfortable.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful and dangerous bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

I will now take any questions you may have.