

Representative Steve Demetriou, Representative Josh Williams, and Members of the House Higher Education Committee:

My name is Cordelia Van der Veer, and I recently finished my first year at The Ohio State University. As a native of Toledo, OH, I was grateful to have the opportunity to attend a first-rate flagship R1 research university at an in-state price. I immensely enjoyed my first year and cannot wait to return.

However, bills like HB 151 and SB 83 make me less than excited to attend a public university in Ohio. Some of the provisions of HB 151 have positive implications, like requiring students to take a course on American History or Government. Beyond this, the legislation will deter students from attending public universities in Ohio with its blatant dismissal of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion programs and lack of consideration for implementation.

As a student, I have benefited from university DEI programs because they have inspired meaningful dialogue between my fellow students and professors. College is the time to learn about new perspectives and cultures. The impactful DEI programs in place are well-liked by students and offer minority students a chance to embrace their identities.

In my classes in political science and public affairs, I value learning about “political controversy” and experiencing psychological “discomfort.” This language in the legislation is vague and highly difficult to measure. In addition, I believe having productive non-ideological discussions about controversial political subjects will make students better equipped to become leaders of Ohio and our nation. Although these topics may prompt psychological discomfort, this is where true learning can happen.

Please consider future students, professors, and staff who will not want to work and study in Ohio if SB 83 and HB 151 pass.

Best,

Cordelia Van der Veer
Student at The Ohio State University