

Opposition Testimony for HB151
House Higher Education Committee
Wednesday, May 17th, 2023
Josie Mayle

Student at Cleveland State University
Representing The Ohio Student
Association

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Miller, and members of the House Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony and perspective on this bill. My name is Josie Mayle. I am a student at Cleveland State University and a resident of Cleveland. I also represent The Ohio Student Association, a nonpartisan, statewide, grassroots organization led by college students in multiple campus chapters across Ohio. On behalf of this organization as well as countless students and educators, I am expressing my opposition to House Bill 151.

I, as well as many of my peers and colleagues, believe that this bill shows no benefit to enhancing higher education in Ohio and will only serve to do harm. The banning of DEI training will not only hurt marginalized groups today, but will hurt our future as we fail to discuss what must be done to help engage with the traditionally disadvantaged members of our society. Additionally, banning programs and discussions based on “controversy” or “bias” is not only pointless, but counterintuitive, especially in higher education. College students are adults capable of drawing their own conclusions based on the material we are exposed to. As a student currently studying in a public university, there is absolutely no existing threat to discussing controversial topics in the classroom. In fact, this is the time where exposure to controversy is healthiest. Having opposing views to consider is how we develop critical thinking skills and independence.

I would also like to ask this committee to consider that passing such a restrictive bill will only serve to hurt your future political prospects. My generation will all be voting very soon. My peers, my professors, and those like me across the state will remember this attempt to restrict not only what we learn, but what we are able to do as workers. Gutting our ability to strike and negotiate as student workers and as professors will be remembered as a direct attack on our freedoms as Americans the next time you appear on the ballot.

Instead of focusing on problems that do not presently exist, I implore you to instead take your concerns elsewhere. I and countless other students are struggling to put food on the table while we pay for our education because we are not fortunate enough to come from backgrounds that allow us to study comfortably. Support for education and students is subpar and desperately needs to be restructured. Show students and educators alike that you care by gearing your focus towards these issues instead.

Thank you for your consideration, and once again for taking the time to consider this

testimony.

Josie Mayle