May 16th, 2023

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

My name is Nona Landis and I have worked in education, including higher education, and education advocacy in the state of Ohio for nearly 10 years. In fact, I moved to Ohio from the east coast because I recognized the strength of Ohio's graduate school programs. I received my Ph.D. in English Literature from Miami University, where I was fortunate enough to study literary works written by authors from across the United States and around the globe. I focused my studies in Multiethnic and Asian American literature and had the wonderful opportunity to teach undergraduate courses in these very subjects. It was through these courses that I met the most diverse range of students and made impactful cross-cultural connections. I even had the opportunity to present my research among well-respected colleagues from all over the world at an international conference at Fudan University in Shanghai. My experiences at Miami made me a better communicator, a more thoughtful teacher, and a more compassionate education advocate.

House Bill 151 stands to do irreparable damage to the kinds of programs that were so meaningful for me and my students at my public university. It will diminish the quality of our education programs across many fields, but especially in the humanities, where enrollment is only growing post-pandemic. If students, both undergraduate and graduate, are unable to learn about our society in its entirety, if they are not able to read works that represent them and their communities, if they are fearful of having discussions about identity and inclusion, then we will surely lose many of these talented students to other schools in other states. Ohio's educational system and its workforce are stronger because of their diversity. HB 151 will only cause harm in these areas and in our communities across the board. I urge you to vote against this detrimental piece of legislation. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.