

Opponent Testimony for SB 83

Higher Education Committee

November 13, 2023

Elizabeth Black, Ohio voter and Undergraduate Engagement Librarian at Ohio State University

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Elizabeth Black. I am first an Ohioan and second a librarian at Ohio State University. I submit this testimony in opposition to SB 83.

In my role I have the great fortune to work with first- and second-year students from a wide variety of backgrounds, many who are from underserved communities. I am better able to support these students thanks to the robust DEI educational opportunities I have here at Ohio State. I have seen students who initially felt unwelcome and unsupported blossom and thrive thanks to intentional efforts by myself and my colleagues. We are all better when everyone in our community is able to contribute their best and this only happens when we are truly welcoming by engaging in regular DEI education and experiences.

In addition to preventing the DEI education that has enabled me to do my job better, SB 83 will limit free speech on campus, will make many of my students and colleagues unwelcome, and will burden an already resource strapped institution with egregious unfunded mandates that provide no value at all.

I urge you to keep our colleges and universities as robust places where all of our students can grow and thrive. I ask that you please consider my testimony and vote no on SB 83.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Black