

My name is Max Eden and I'm a research fellow in education policy at the American Enterprise Institute, a non-profit non-partisan 501c(3) public policy think tank. AEI takes no institutional positions; my comments are fully my own.

I write in favor of SB 83, due to the strong measures it takes to mitigate the influence of "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion" (DEI) ideology in higher education. Defenders of DEI frequently insist that "Diversity," "Equity," and "Inclusion" are all inherently good things. How, therefore, could someone be against good things?

The answer is that those words were strategically chosen for exactly this reason. No less of an authority than Kimberlé Crenshaw, the woman who coined the phrase "critical race theory," has admitted that "DEI" is another phrase for applied critical race theory. You need only look at materials in academic journals and conferences related to DEI to see that this is true. Critical race theory is a neo-Marxist ideology that takes race, rather than class, as the salient social divide by which to overturn a democratic system of government. The term "critical" refers to Gramscian cultural Marxism, which aims to control the means of cultural production, e.g., universities, in order to transform the morality of a civilization.

Why, then, should Ohio taxpayers fund a project intended to increase racial division, which it renames "consciousness," in order to overturn the morality and ultimately government of American society? It may be doubted that this was the purpose of any state legislator in subsidizing Ohio's public universities, or that this purpose would be supported by the median taxpayer.

The only answer, offered by DEI proponents, is that DEI is somehow good for minority student achievement. There is literally zero rigorous or reliable evidence of this.

There are, on the other hand, plenty of reasons to root out DEI. For one, it has a natural tendency to destroy academic excellence and make a joke out of academia in general. For evidence of the former, consider the recent exposé of John Sailer, written up in the WSJ, of the effects of "diversity statements" on academic hiring. It is obvious to anyone that "diversity statements" are political litmus tests that are introduced to prioritize ideological adherence to leftist ideology over academic merit.

The examples Mr. Sailer offers speak for themselves on this front. If the university is truly interested in, say, advancing the frontiers of knowledge in theoretical physics, it will hire professors based on their understanding of and potential to contribute to that field. If it is not truly interested in that, it will hire professors based on their understanding of and potential to contribute to an unrelated political project. Ohio State university professors have shown pretty clearly that they would prefer to not prioritize the advancement of knowledge when they are permitted to prioritize leftist ideology first.

This is not only a problem for the advancement of human knowledge. It is also a problem for the general respect that citizens have for education writ large. It is not difficult for citizens to

figure out the implications of hiring based on ideology for university professors in the humanities and the social sciences; it will obviously engender an academic consensus that is based not on anything resembling the truth, but rather on the principles of the leftist ideology.

This should properly breed a categorical disrespect for higher education – indeed for education in general – among the citizenry. In a system where higher education is fully captured by an ideological force hostile to the fundamental elements of that civilization, it is proper for citizens to categorically view it as a joke. The plummeting public trust in higher education is a healthy development given the circumstances. But it is not the sign of healthy circumstances. In a healthy society, legislators take steps to prevent higher education institutions from being captured by a hostile ideological force.

You have the opportunity to do that with this bill. DEI need to be totally uprooted from Ohio's public colleges and universities if those institutions are to continue to be centers of academic excellence that serve the best interests of Ohio citizens.