

Testimony of Ryan Skinner, Ph.D.  
Before the House Higher Education Committee  
Rep. Tom Young, Chair  
November 28 2023

Chair Young, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Miller, and Members of the Higher Education Committee:

My name is Ryan Skinner, and I am an Associate Professor of Music and African American and African Studies at The Ohio State University, where I have taught for thirteen years. I do not represent Ohio State, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Substitute Senate Bill 83.

I strongly oppose this new version of the bill for several reasons. Substitute Senate Bill 83:

- Prevents faculty from bargaining over retrenchment, evaluations, and tenure. This is an affront to the rights of faculty unions and would give administrations far too much power to close programs and terminate faculty positions without due process.
- Dictates parameters for annual faculty evaluation, circumventing established institutional practices and inappropriately micromanaging faculty assessment.
- Undermines the protections of tenure and the principles of academic freedom that tenure upholds through mandated post-tenure review.
- Makes faculty vulnerable to unsubstantiated complaints about restricting “intellectual diversity” in the classroom (a red herring), a clear and present threat to academic integrity and freedom.
- Opens the door to harassment and threats to faculty by making syllabus details publicly available, including instructor contact information and course schedules.

Substitute Senate Bill is, in short, as inappropriate as it is unnecessary.

Ohio Colleges and Universities already maintain strong guidelines and practices concerning academic freedom and faculty evaluation. This bill identifies problems that do not, in fact, exist. Further, a faculty’s ability to organize and defend their professional integrity in the face of administrative (and governmental) overreach must be maintained.

For these reasons, I stand in opposition to Substitute Senate Bill 83.

Thank you.