

Opponent Testimony for Senate Bill 83
Before the House Committee on Higher Education
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Clara Conover
Ohio Student Activist Alliance

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

My name is Clara Conover, and I am a student at Miami University in my final year. I am submitting testimony as a private citizen and student organizer strongly opposing Senate Bill 83 and the harm it imposes on higher education in Ohio. Its revisions have not rendered this bill to be 'better' but have merely dulled the teeth of the same beast students and faculty alike fought in April. It needs to go.

We stood there for six hours, until our legs hurt, and our stomachs audibly growled in the hearing room. We folded our printed testimony and frantically jotted new ideas in the margins whenever a speaker caught our ear. The electricity was palpable. The thunderous roars from the statehouse rotunda cracked like lightning. There were *hundreds* of us, drawn to Columbus from each corner of Ohio to vehemently oppose a bill seeking to destroy higher education that was created without input from those on our campuses. Chair Cirino cried wolf, attributing shadowy figures of a 'woke' agenda to classrooms he had never entered and did not seek to understand.

As a student in the classrooms of such controversy, my stake in the quality and reputation of Ohio higher education is immense. I graduate in May with three degrees and two degree certificates, all from Miami University of Ohio. When my future employers read of my Ohioan public university education on my resume, I will not be in the board room to defend an honor that this bill will tarnish.

Senate Bill 83 is a step backwards for Ohio. Regressive education policy is embarrassing for our state, and ignorance is theft of the greatest degree. Specifically looking at 'climate policies' as a controversial idea that universities and faculty cannot take sides on: who are you kidding? When my generation is choking on the smog of yours, I deserve to know why I cannot breathe. Lukewarm spineless state-imposed university policy statements of neutrality do not re-write the truth of the matter. Our universities owe us, as students, honesty.

If this bill passes, there will be more open parking spots on Ohio's campuses. There will be empty dorm beds and quiet quads. I will watch my classmates and friends move away from Ohio. I will watch my educators leave, I will watch my degrees mean less and less. If Ohio is not educating for our real lives in the real world and cutting through 'controversy' to reach the truth, it is failing every single student, all 480,000 of us.

Thank you.