

Testimony of Treva B. Lindsey, Ph.D.  
Before the House of Higher Education Committee  
Rep. Tom Young, Chair  
November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023

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

My name is Treva B. Lindsey, and I am a professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at the Ohio State University for over a decade. I do not represent Ohio State University but am submitting testimony as a private citizen and award-winning educator in opposition to Substitute Senate Bill 83.

Without equivocation, this bill would devalue higher education in the great state of Ohio. From its attack on labor, shared governance, academic freedom of expression, intellectual curiosity, and tenure and promotion, this bill would effectively deter top-tier faculty, staff, and students from enrolling in our state's colleges and universities. This bill is a direct attack on faculty working on some of the most cutting-edge and innovative areas of scholarly inquiry as well as on students seeking to broaden their horizons and acquire critical thinking, writing, collaboration, and analytical skills that prepare them for the twenty-first century world.

This bill will not encourage a diversity of thought, nor will it address the ongoing issue of the state legislature's divestment from funding public higher education. Senate Bill 83 will only further drive students, faculty, and staff away from our institutions. This bill, if passed, will contribute to a brain-drain. With many young people already leaving the state and with highly recruited faculty presented with out-of-state opportunities that include collective bargaining, sincere protection of academic freedom, investments in creating inclusive excellence in educational settings, and robust tenure and promotion protections, Ohio will become less desirable as a place for those seeking the best of higher education.

I am trained as a historian and have been a professor in an interdisciplinary field that is often under attack because of its focus on inequities, disparities, and injustices. Under Senate Bill 83, it is seemingly inevitable that my department could be dismantled under the overly broad and vague guise of "retrenchment." My student evaluations are among the most stellar in my college and my students leave my classes and those of my departmental colleagues prepared to engage a rapidly changing world with incisive insights and powerful tools such as complex analysis, strengthened oral and written communication skills, and exposure to a wide-range of perspectives- which are all *necessary* skills to possess in an increasingly globalized world.

I cannot emphasize enough how detrimental this bill would be for students, faculty, and staff at Ohio's public higher education institutions, and more generally, for Ohio's future. Quality higher education is rooted in providing opportunities for in-depth exploration, respectful debate and disagreement, and exposure to people from various backgrounds and lived experiences. Without question, diminishing the power of shared governance, attacking specific programs under the banner of "protecting intellectual diversity," limiting how faculty can collectively bargain, and devaluing the importance of inclusive excellence would be destructive. Please vote against Senate Bill 83.