

Opponent Testimony for Senate Bill 83
House Committee on Higher Education
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Chair Young, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Miller, and Members of the Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Sumaya Hamadmad and I am an OSU researcher and a member of the inclusive excellence subcommittee of the OSU University Staff Advisory Committee (USAC). I am here today to express my opposition to Senate Bill 83. I believe this bill raises significant issues that could negatively impact the educational and work experience for students and staff alike, especially those from diverse backgrounds. As a Muslim, female, and immigrant staff member, I feel this bill will especially target the inclusivity of our academic environment.

This bill's restriction on mandatory Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs and training raises red flags for me as a member of the inclusive excellence committee of USAC who works hard to ensure the university holds up the values of understanding and appreciation of diverse perspectives. These programs play a crucial role in fostering an inclusive atmosphere, allowing people from various backgrounds, including those of different faiths, to feel heard and respected.

I am an immigrant from Syria. My home country has been living under dictatorship for the last 40 years. I chose to come to the US twenty-three years ago because of the values of freedom of speech and freedom of expression. I feel this bill will impose restrictions on these great American values. The bill will introduce censorship and hinder the expression of public opinions on public policy controversies. This is going to threaten academic freedom, critical thinking, cultural diversity, exposure to different perspectives, and intellectual growth. In today's interconnected world censorship is never a solution.

This bill will make it more difficult for Ohio's colleges and universities to attract and retain students, staff and faculty. It will also restrict relationships with global partners which is going to negatively impact funding and opportunities in today's highly competitive world.

In conclusion, I urge you to vote not and oppose Senate Bill 83

Thank you.