



Ohio House of Representatives ***Higher Education Committee***

Good morning, Chairman Young and distinguished members of the House Higher Education Committee:

My name is Stanley Goldfarb. I am a board-certified nephrologist and chairman of Do No Harm, a national association of health care professions. I am also a former professor and associate dean of curriculum at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.

It's only been in my retirement from academia, I've spent this much time engaging government institutions and public policy. Truth be told, I've never been a particularly political person. My first address to a legislative body was with Kansas senators just this past February. Had anyone asked me, only a year or so ago, what I'd likely be doing in retirement, I would have said, enjoying more time as a grandfather, theatregoer, and golfer - not becoming a political activist in my 70s. Yet here I am.

And why am I here, precisely? It's because politicization I began seeing at the university level, is cementing rapidly across our education-to-workforce pipeline. From the classroom to the boardroom, a single political ideology now dominates American life. Superficially, its terms and tenets appeal to our most altruistic instincts: *diversity; equity; inclusion; anti-racism; etc.* But when examined closely, in theory, or experienced directly, in practice, we find a masquerade of illiberalism and its name is identity politics.

If I leave no other impact on you today, let it be this: There are many ideologies in the world. An ideology is nothing more than a collection of ideas. No ideology, nor the ideas they encompass, should be treated as sacrosanct, let alone in a university setting, much less in a free, secular, and pluralistic society. I know our time is limited, but if the committee will indulge me, I'd like to provide a few examples of how, *critical theory and its functional analogue DEI*, the reigning ideology of academia, has forcibly crowded out intellectual diversity writ large.

That very same day I met with Kansas senators, national press reported The Ohio State University sought the hire of a "Philosophy of Race" professor. The area of expertise includes "the epistemological significance of race or racism" and "race in the philosophy of science." The Department of Physics, sought a professor whose focus is "issues relevant to educational equity." The Department of Anthropology, sought an archeologist whose work emphasizes

“decolonization, feminist theory, queer theory, critical race theory, and/or Indigenous ontologies.”¹

Later, it was reported that employment in Ohio State University’s College of Engineering, included ideological job screening of potential personnel. Applicants, such as those seeking nuclear engineering position, for example, must submit “a written statement that describes (personal) commitment to (DEI).” The College even provides a corresponding rubric to illustrate assessment of these personal statements. Such statements of faith have been required in the Engineering College’s annual reviews since 2020².

A student-developed, mandatory learning module for first-year medical students instructs them to examine “the historical basis for some of the racist practices in medicine.” The team that developed this offering says it looks forward to future courses to draw attention to “the underlying societal drivers that cause medical disparities.”³ In reality, there is no valid evidence that social factors cause health disparities rather than are simply co-occurring. OSUCOM claims that this lecture is necessary because a “lack of awareness and denial of racism within the profession of medicine” is responsible for physicians “not recognizing their negatively biased attitudes, perspectives and habits.” The school must, it says, use implicit bias training to accomplish the “rectifying of these knowledge gaps” in its medical students.⁴

Local whistleblowers, have shared their stories, including one Ohio nurse who told us: *In February of 2023, the Summa Health Diversity Director published a blog announcing implicit bias training requirements “to reduce health disparities.” The diversity director’s blog invited a response, to which the nurse submitted comments citing statistical and observational data about the reality of health disparities, questioning the underlying reasoning in the director’s blog. The nurse then asked questions which challenged the efficacy of implicit bias training. The contrarian blog was never posted. It was not seen by the workforce, other than leadership, yet it resulted in the nurse receiving a written discipline, requiring two implicit bias training sessions. This health care professional resigned rather than participate in training that compelled her to view herself as a member of an identity group.*⁵

My colleagues have compiled further evidence, covering a range of Ohio institutions and practices, from recruiting and admissions policy to what has been imbedded in curriculum. Much of this has been made available to the public, and we are happy to submit our findings in detail to the committee, as well as walk through additional material with members and staff.

¹ Minding the Campus. *Faculty Packing at Ohio State*. <https://www.mindingthecampus.org/2023/02/02/faculty-packing-at-ohio-state/>.

² Minding the Campus. *Litmus Tests for Nuclear Scientists*. <https://www.mindingthecampus.org/2023/03/07/litmus-tests-for-nuclear-scientists/>.

³ OSUCOM. *Anti-racism curriculum and assault victim curriculum*. <https://medicine.osu.edu/why-choose-us/annual-report/antiracism-curriculum-and-assault-victim-curriculum>.

⁴ OSUCOM. *Students develop teaching module addressing historical and ongoing racist practices in medicine*. <https://medicine.osu.edu/news/teaching-module-addressing-practices>.

⁵ Do No Harm. [An Ohio Nurse Tells His Story - Do No Harm \(donoharmmedicine.org\)](https://www.donoharmmedicine.org) (August 21, 2023).

In closing, if Ohio moves forward with efforts to ensure its system of higher education genuinely serves as a safe space of inclusion of all, not merely inclusion for convenience, you will be in good company. **Texas'** SB14 takes effect January 1st, 2024, eliminating DEI offices and mandatory DEI-related training; so-called "diversity statements" are prohibited in the hiring process and penalties are imposed for non-compliance.⁶ Already in affect is **Florida's** SB266/HB1035, prohibiting expenditure on DEI-related initiatives.⁷ As is **Tennessee's** HB1376/SB817, prohibiting DEI statements and spending on initiatives promoting such divisiveness.⁸

Only last week, the **Iowa** Board of Regents, mandated their universities "take reasonable steps" to ensure no campus constituent is required to submit any sort of DEI statement or be "compelled to disclose their pronouns; prohibit the consideration of race and other protected characteristics in admissions "consistent with law;" update general education category names "to accurately reflect the array of options students may select from to satisfy these requirements and ensure a breadth of offerings" ; explore an initiative to promote education on free speech and civic engagement; and look into new recruitment strategies for "advancing diversity of intellectual and philosophical perspectives in faculty and staff."⁹

If enacted, SB83 will return higher education to a recent time when we did not coerce a particular world view on students, we did not consider anything but a student's individual record of accomplishments, and we did our best to aspire to the American ideal of treating each person as an individual and not as a member of a particular identity group.

We should be living through an era of unprecedented medical advancement paralleled by our value and protection of individual human rights. Bizarrely, we are, at best, seeing scientific revolution and enlightenment principles met with suspicion, and new systems of discrimination prescribed as our remedy to heal discrimination of the past. There is a better way. Thank you for facilitating this meaningful, democratic exchange.

⁶ Do No Harm. [Texas Leads The Way On DEI Reforms - Do No Harm \(donoharmmedicine.org\)](https://www.donoharmmedicine.org) (May 30, 2023).

⁷ Do No Harm. [Florida's Two New Laws Are Big Wins - Do No Harm \(donoharmmedicine.org\)](https://www.donoharmmedicine.org) (May 4, 2023).

⁸ Do No Harm. [Tennessee's New Legislation Is A Huge Victory - Do No Harm \(donoharmmedicine.org\)](https://www.donoharmmedicine.org) (April 18, 2023).

⁹ Inside Higher Education. *Iowa Regents Approve DEI Cuts.* <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2023/11/20/iowa-regents-approve-significant-cuts-dei-offerings>.