

*We write to express our strong opposition to Senate Bill 83. This bill is a threat to every noble principle that the historical profession stands for, including the freedom to read, discuss, and debate new ideas and multiple perspectives on the past. Historians teach students, among other things, how to think critically about complex issues and discuss them in writing and in conversation in a classroom setting.*

*SB 83 would make that impossible. This bill will endanger rather than protect the free exchange of ideas in the classroom, creating conditions in which both professor and the students may be reluctant to speak openly. The bill assumes the worst motives on the part of the faculty, and it describes a crisis that does not exist. Moreover, the bill ignores the professional standards that scholars must meet before they even enter the classroom; their deep sense of obligation to their students; and their dedication to the pursuit of historical knowledge.*

*This measure will have an impact far beyond history, as important as that is. If it becomes law, it will undermine the state's ability to recruit top-rank faculty and students in all fields. It will destroy the reputation of our colleges and universities, replacing serious academic standards with a narrow range of acceptable topics chosen by government officials. In a mature democracy like the United States, we should not fear the free and open exchange of ideas regardless of the venue.*

*We call upon the historical profession, the academic community, and the people of Ohio to defend academic freedom and oppose SB 83.*

Professor Joan E. Cashin, Ohio State University, President of the Ohio Academy of History, on behalf of the Executive Committee:

Professor Janet R. Bednarek, University of Dayton

Professor Ann Heiss, Kent State University

Professor Bradley Keefer, Kent State University-Ashtabula

Professor Julie Mujic, Denison University

Professor Martha Pallante, Youngstown State University

Professor Daniel Rivers, Ohio State University

Professor David Staley, Ohio State University

Professor David Strittmatter, Ohio Northern University

*The Ohio Academy of History boasts a membership that reaches across numerous arenas, from college faculty to high school social studies teachers to museum professionals and independent scholars.*