

Chairman Cirino, Vice Chair Rulli, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today.

My name is Jane Bogan. I am an educator. I taught middle and high school students with mild and moderate learning differences for 7 years. I have worked at the college level to prepare educators to work with children and adolescents with diverse learning needs for the past 16 years. My testimony today is solely my own and I write to you as a private citizen, not as a representative of any college or university.

I am strongly opposed to Senate Bill 83 and its companion bill in the Ohio House. This bill is designed to destroy education from higher education all the way down to Pre-Kindergarten-12<sup>th</sup> grade. First, my field of special education elevates, emphasizes, and encourages inclusion. I teach it in my classes, I look for it when I observe and evaluate my teacher candidates in the classroom, and I model it in all that I do in my job. SB83 bans required diversity, equality, and inclusion training and courses; this ban would not allow me to properly train my future educators to meet the needs of students they will be serving in their classrooms. In an article titled "Most Classroom Teachers Feel Unprepared to Support Students with Disabilities" in the May 29, 2019 issue of Education Week, Corey Mitchell wrote that "[l]ess than 1 in 5 general education teachers feel 'very well prepared' to teach students with mild to moderate learning disabilities..." Eliminating a required class on inclusion that helps prepare teachers to do the job they are expected to do – include and support students with diverse learning needs – will lead to significant frustration and potentially lead them to leave the profession, adding to the already significant teacher shortage in Ohio. SB83 mandates that institutions ensure the fullest degree of "intellectual diversity" yet disallows any type of required inclusion training. The concept of inclusion references intellectual diversity in its very nature. Every aspect of SB83 is at odds with itself, first requiring something and then disallowing that same thing. SB83 will destroy the very thing for which higher education stands – the education of its students.

Subsequently, SB83 will also have a cascading effect into the realm of P-12 education because teachers will graduate from programs having no understanding of how to form or maintain inclusive classrooms where every single child feels welcomed and supported, where every child has their academic and social/emotional needs supported by a trained educator with a toolbox of strategies, where truth is taught in a way that allows children to take the perspectives of others in society and empathy is learned. This bill is the means to tear down what remains of the dignity of those who are different, whose voices need to be heard. According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; 2004) and the Ohio Department of Education who follows IDEA (2004), children identified as having a disability that negatively impacts their performance in school are guaranteed an Individualized Education Program (IEP) which documents the details of the services necessary for a student with a disability to be successful in school and a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. If an educator who has no training on inclusion is put into a classroom, that child on the IEP who is guaranteed free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment will not receive the rights they have been promised by the federal government.

Finally, in an article titled "Diverse Teachers Matter" posted February 1, 2021 on the National School Board Association website, Glenn Cook cites studies that show a diverse teacher workforce is "critical to improving student performance, especially among Black and Latino youth. They have better academic performance, improved graduation rates, and are more likely to attend college..." SB83 works to prevent

the diversification of the teacher workforce by banning required DEI training and courses, eliminating any consideration of diversity in the hiring or recruitment processes, and no policies designed to assist under-represented populations in education. Without the ability to recruit diverse candidates into higher education and without the ability to adequately prepare them to work with diverse students, the education system will be even less able to adequately support students in minority populations in being successful, contributing members of society.

I am an educator. I advocate for my teacher candidates, and I advocate for children who do not have a voice at this level. SB83 will harm higher education and it will harm K-12 education, especially for children with diverse learning needs and children from diverse backgrounds. I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful and dangerous bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.