

Written Statement of Reid Davis regarding Ohio Senate Bill 83.

I write you members of the committee as a student in the state of Ohio who has been through a lot. I Am 23, and there are times when topics in education or learning have made me uncomfortable, and while I am generally a very private person I feel the need to say Senate Bill 83 is a mistake. I know you have what you think are the best interests of students and people in Ohio at heart here, but this will only hurt us. If you want people to feel comfortable all the time in the classroom, I think you have missed a fundamental part of learning. Discomfort is a normal response when discussing or learning about certain topics for the first time, how do you tell someone about the horrors of Imperial Japanese War Crimes in Asia and the Pacific without making at least one person feel uncomfortable? The issue is that you can't, not without sanitizing the past in a way that makes learning from it or seeing for what it is impossible.

But I think the bigger issue with this bill is that it reads like an attempt to through neutral language force an education that runs in line with the wishes of the state on everyone. Publicly posting syllabi so that they can be combed through for the perception of bias, requiring a government class that will have to discuss the actions of historical figures as "neutral" while requiring readings that are explicitly critical of certain types of opposition to government policy and which are deeply in favor of the state in general, and removing the ability for students to create groups based on their own identity where they can discuss shared experiences and seek community. This bill reads as if it is deeply ideologically biased, but the authors did not want to admit that they simply don't want liberals or "woke" types in education. It will chill speech not just for staff but for students, make it harder for students to find a sense of community with each other, and rather than promote diversity of thought it will instead reduce it in favor of a particular political party.

I thank the Committee for reading and considering my testimony and I urge you to vote no on this legislation and to try to prevent harm from coming to education in the state of Ohio. I wish all of you a pleasant evening.