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Ohio School Psychologists Association  
Written Interested Party Testimony on SB 83  
Senate Workforce & Higher Education Committee  
Rachel Chilton, OSPA Executive Director

Chairman Cirino, Vice Chair Rulli and Ranking Member Ingram, thank you for allowing me to provide written testimony on SB 83. My name is Rachel Chilton and I am executive director of the Ohio School Psychologists Association, which represents more than 800 school psychologists in Ohio schools and school psychology trainees in higher education institutions. We have strong concerns with SB 83 because of a provision that will likely cause all of our school psychologist training programs to lose their accreditation. Ohio requires that all school psychologists seeking a license have graduated from an approved program.

Although OSPA has concerns with most aspects of this legislation, I will focus on the one provision that directly impacts our training programs: the ban on requiring DEI coursework. In order for programs to be accredited, and thus their graduate students eligible for an Ohio school psych license, programs must be approved by the National Association of School Psychologists. The NASP requirements for approval protect the welfare of children, youth, and families by ensuring competently trained school psychologists. Among those requirements is NASP Training Domain 8: Equitable Practices for Diverse Student Populations.

Educators are required to serve all students. We know that when school psychologists go to work in our schools that they will encounter a diverse student body. It is important they are prepared to serve students from all backgrounds and of all identities to ensure those children receive the correct academic supports toward academic achievement. Coursework covering diverse student populations is essential to prepare graduating school psychologists for this work.

NASP Domain 8 ensures school psychologists have “knowledge of individual differences, abilities, disabilities, and other diverse characteristics and of the impact they have on development and learning.” It also ensures they study research related to diversity in children, families and communities, including things like religion, culture, race, socioeconomic status and other variables. They can then utilize evidence-based strategies to enhance services in the regular classroom and in special education to address the impacts related to diversity.



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To meet this Domain 8 requirement, Ohio school psychology programs require a standalone DEI course and also incorporate the concept into other coursework. Senate Bill 83 would require our university programs to eliminate this required coursework and as a result would lose their statuses as NASP-approved programs. Further, Ohio requires anyone seeking a license as a school psychologist or other type of pupil services license to have completed an approved program of study. Without NASP approval, our graduates from our programs would not qualify for licensure.

Ohio is already facing a school psychologist shortage and has been for at least a decade. To lose the ability to license our own graduates would decimate the pipeline of new practitioners coming into our schools. The university programs would be unable to recruit candidates from other states and aspiring school psychologists in Ohio would flee to programs elsewhere. Without school psychologists, Ohio schools would be unable to meet the needs of students with disabilities, leading to a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the loss of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act dollars.

We ask that you please reconsider this legislation because of the catastrophic effect it would have on any number of higher education programs, not just school psychology. Thank you for your consideration.