

Testimony of Mary E. Triece, Ph.D.
Professor, School of Communication,
Director of The Women's Studies Program

Before the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee
Senator Jerry Cirino, Chair

April 17, 2023

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Rulli, Ranking Member Ingram, and Members of the Workforce and Higher Education Committee:

My name is Mary Triece. I am a professor in the School of Communication at The University of Akron where I have taught for 25 years. I do not represent The University of Akron, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 83.

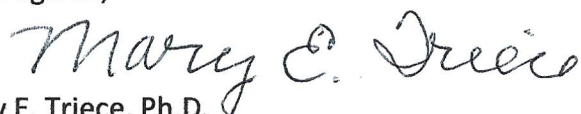
I have read Senate Bill 83 in its entirety. I firmly believe the bill will have a negative impact on the quality of education on Ohio's college campuses.

First, by constraining the ability of professors to introduce and engage discussion around what the bill calls "controversial matters," we are limiting our students' abilities to practice critical thinking and speaking skills that are needed in the workplace. It is precisely through engaging in these discussions that we foster critical dialogue on pressing issues facing us as citizens of Ohio and the U.S. In all of my classes, I am dedicated to fostering an open classroom environment in which all perspectives are welcomed.

Second, Section 3345.87 (C) will have a harmful effect on our students. This section prohibits "state institutions" from funding or facilitating any "program" of "activity" that "advantages" "students by any group identity." This section would result in the dismantling of a myriad of majors, minors, and certificate programs from which our students benefit and that prospective employers appreciate seeing on a new graduate's resume. This section would also lead to the prohibition of a host of student organizations that enhance student life on campus, that provide meaningful relationships and experiences for students, and that offer opportunities for learning skills required in the workplace. According to this section, even organizations such as the Young Republications or Student Democrats would be dismantled. And yet, participation in these types of organizations and activities provides our students with the experiences that prospective employers look for in new hires.

Although your intentions may be well-positioned, I firmly believe this bill will harm our students, leaving them ill-equipped to participate in the workforce and in their communities. As such, it is also bad for the state's economy.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary E. Triece". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Mary E. Triece, Ph.D.