

Testimony of Alexander Copsey Oliszewski  
Before the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee  
Senator Jerry Cirino, Chair  
April 17th, 2023

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

My name is Alexander Copsey Oliszewski, and I am a professor of Theatre and Design at The Ohio State University, where I have taught for 11 years. I do not represent The Ohio State University, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 83.

Senate Bill 83 poses a significant threat to academic freedom, the quality of higher education in Ohio, and the well-being of our diverse communities. The bill's limitations on discussing controversial topics and censoring specific histories infringe on the important role of faculty to search for truth and its free exposition. By threatening tenure and state funding for those who violate the provisions of this bill, we risk harming our ability to attract top academic talent and negatively impacting the quality of education in our state.

Furthermore, SB 83's ban on mandatory diversity, equity, and inclusion training is counterproductive and harmful. The absence of such training could lead to increased hate speech and discrimination, which are already on the rise both locally and nationally.

Additionally, the bill jeopardizes the accreditation of institutions like The Ohio State University, as well as mental health professionals' training and licensing in the state. This not only contradicts the goals set by the Budget of the State of Ohio but also directly undermines our state's commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive environment.

Finally, Ohio Senate Bill 83 is a clear infringement of our constitutional right to free speech as clearly and unambiguously laid out in the First Amendment. Indeed, Ohio Senate Bill 83 is clearly unconstitutional and rather than allowing for a diversity of thought it is a clear attempt at prohibiting free speech.

As a concerned citizen and an educator, I strongly encourage the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee not to support Ohio Senate Bill 83. This bill would have profound negative effects on Ohio's educational landscape and diverse communities, be an unambiguously infringement of free speech as defined in our Constitution. In these ways Ohio Senate Bill 83 would be devastating to higher education in Ohio and to the Constitutional rights of our citizens.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions or provide further information on this important matter.

Sincerely,  
Alexander Copsey Oliszewski  
51 S Brinker Ave  
Columbus, OH 43204