

OHIO FAMILIES UNITE

FOR POLITICAL ACTION AND CHANGE

Chair 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 Emily Cole, I'm a resident of Hilliard Ohio, and I am the Executive Director of Ohio Families Unite for Political Action and Change, or OFUPAC. The families I stand with and for often disproportionately bear the brunt of the legislative and policy decisions made in this space, given the oppressive expansion of hyper-partisan politics inherent in this general assembly. I am here today to stand for our families in strong opposition to Senate Bill 83.

Frankly, as both a parent and in my professional role, I'm appalled by this bill. This is an attack on my children and other children's freedom to learn. This is a disservice to my children's future education and would virtually ensure the collapse of our higher education system, as I can tell you right now there is no way I would send my children to higher education in Ohio if this were to pass.

It is disgusting to me that we as a society are having an honest conversation around whether or not we should dismiss the very identity of our neighbors as controversial. Black Ohioans exist. Gay Ohioans exist. Trans Ohioans exist. Women exist. All of these things are facts. All of these identities, and more, are valid. It is shameful we are even discussing wiping their existence, let alone *banning their presence*, from being discussed in higher education.

This would leave all youth unprepared to enter the workforce and economy as vibrant and productive citizens given the ever-expanding globalization of our reality. We are setting ourselves up to fall even further behind.

I urge you to vote no on Senate Bill 83. This bill is bad for students, bad for higher education, and bad for Ohioans. Thank you for your time. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

OHIO FAMILIES UNITE

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