

**Opponent Testimony for Ohio Senate Bill 83  
Senate Workforce and Higher Education  
April 19, 2023**

**Nicole Londo  
Future Middle School Teacher  
Ohio Citizen**

Chairman 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 Nicole Londo and I am a senior at the University of Akron majoring in Middle Level Education Social Studies and Language Arts with a minor in Spanish and a certificate in Conflict Transformation and Social Entrepreneurship. I will graduate in December and intend to obtain a teaching position in the Akron area. I do not represent the University of Akron, and am submitting this testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 83.

In this bill, I am deeply concerned about the lack of clarity pertaining to the proposed ban on controversial content.

As a future teacher, it is imperative that I am knowledgeable about the backgrounds of my students. Throughout my time at The University of Akron, I have learned how to navigate and celebrate diversity and cater to all. The definitions given in Sec. 3345.0217 lines 193-195 are incredibly concerning. My students should feel safe and welcomed in my classroom and in order for this to happen, they need to know that I am an advocate for not only their education, but for them as individuals.

After four years at UA, I have gained an immense amount of knowledge through my learning about and working with marginalized communities. Under this bill and its definition of "specified concepts", future teacher candidates would not be able to gain this same level of knowledge at our state's universities. Had my professors not taught me about allyship, diversity, social justice, sustainability, systematic racism, gender identity, equity, and inclusion, I know I would not be prepared to teach today's learners in building a strong and inclusive Ohio future.

Having spent over 100 hours in local Akron schools, I understand the importance of building relationships and affirming students' identities. For example, I was assisting in a middle school where a student identified as non-binary. Due to my education on the topic of gender identity, I was able to successfully make this vulnerable student feel safe and welcome simply by asking their preferred pronouns and addressing them that way. Under the definition of "controversial belief or policy" in lines 183-187, this inclusion would not be taught to future educators. If teachers are not prepared on how to approach these situations, all youth will not feel safe in the classroom.

The education community deserves better. Future educators need to be prepared to cater to the rich diversity of Ohio's citizens, and in order to do this, our higher education institutions need the liberty and freedom to teach the truth- regardless of what a few misguided lawmakers deem controversial concepts. The passage of this bill will degrade and de-professionalize one of our most sacred professions, adding to an already significant statewide teacher shortage and recruiting loss into the profession.

I urge you to consider my testimony and vote no to this injurious, undemocratic, and unjust bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify here today.