

Testimony of Sam Braden
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 Sam Braden, and I am a second year student of art and architecture history, arts management, and fashion at Miami University. I do not represent Miami University, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 83.

I chose my degrees to be a part of the humanities because I love the idea that we better understand our human existence through art and other cultural materials. The humanities and the objects I study are important for a variety of reasons. They help us understand our past, preserve heritage, advance knowledge, but most importantly it supports a deeper understanding of who and what we are. It listens to the voices of so many generations. It is the ‘why’ behind the art. Why did I do that? What is the purpose of creation? What is the meaning of life? What are the moral consequences of human existence? Why do cruelty and good both exist?

These are all looming, big questions that the humanities help solve and digest. Now, rather, my focus on answering these questions has been detoured by the fear that the existence of my major and the humanities in Ohio will be destroyed. Destroyed by Senate Bill 83 that is meant to serve those seeking higher education. A place where I was born in, worked in, studied, lived, and evolved in– no longer supports me and the things that I value. I am now filled with these questions: Where will I turn for the education I want? How will my credits transfer to a different educational institution? How much will school cost out of state? Where will I turn to work outside of Ohio?

Questions that are ironically inhibiting my daily ability to learn by the mere thought– thought alone– of Senate Bill 83.