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Testimony submitted to the Workforce & Higher Education

Committee of the Ohio Senate

Dear 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 Emily Everhart. I teach art history at a small art college in Ohio, and I was born, raised, and educated in Ohio. I am strongly opposed to Senate Bill 83 and its companion bill in the Ohio House.

People often are confused about what art historians do, so I should clarify that I do not make art. I teach history. I am a historian, and that is an enormous responsibility--not because of the common misconception that if we do not know our history, we are doomed to repeat it. Instead, I tell my students, history is important because we live it. We are shaped by it every day. The history of the settlement of Cincinnati and its development during the 1800s and 1900s is written on my family. My people on the westside came from Appalachia, on the eastside from Germany, and my attitudes, ideals, habits, where I choose to live, my religion, the ways I raise my kids, and the ways I teach my students are shaped by those dynamics. It would be irresponsible of me not to explore with my students the myriad historical events, cultural and intellectual developments, political struggles, even the physical landscapes, and all the nuanced ways these might have impacted them.

Teaching history and writing history requires trial and error, and if done right, that will always hold the potential for controversy. Sometimes I get the histories wrong, or I teach them in less than clear ways, or I wish I had added one idea and ignored another. History is a constantly evolving and imperfect practice. I am opposed to restrictions on the content that I teach, from whatever corner of the American political field they might come. As a highly credentialed and demonstratively responsible educator, I deserve the freedom in my classroom to make history relevant and useful to my students in broad and dynamic ways. This is a matter of academic freedom, a foundational principle continuously upheld in American history and one that makes our education system superior to many other states'. American educators do not teach in climates of fear.

Likewise, the rights of American workers to strike are long enshrined and should be upheld regardless of the type or scale of an industry and whether it is private or public.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this *dangerous* bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.