

Testimony of Isis Barra Costa, Ph.D.
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 Isis Barra Costa, and I am a professor of Latin American Literature and Culture at Ohio State University where I have taught since 2015. I do not represent Ohio State University, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 83.

I am deeply concerned about SB 83 and the unprecedented political interference and micromanagement that it would inflict on Ohio's colleges and universities. I ask that you do not support this legislation.

SB 83 is a series of contradictions that claims to promote "intellectual diversity" while simultaneously attempting to legislate the content and manner in which certain topics can be addressed. This would have a chilling effect on academic freedom, and would make it more difficult for Ohio's colleges and universities to attract students and faculty.

SB 83 also would create an inordinate amount of unworkable mandates, most of which are simply more burdensome versions of what our colleges and universities already do. Giving administrators, faculty, and the chancellor more unfunded busy work takes away from student learning and adds to bureaucracy. This does not enhance higher education.

The bill also attacks workers' rights by attempting to ban the right to strike. This is a thinly veiled attempt to weaken the voice of campus workers, who have every right to advocate for fair working conditions, which are the students' learning conditions.

There are real problems in higher education that we need to address: increased tuition and debt, student retention and completion, and reductions in academic programs and full-time faculty positions. SB 83 gets at none of that, and will do nothing to add value to our colleges and universities.

Respectfully, I ask that you reject this bill, which could do real, irreversible damage to Ohio higher education.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Isis Barra Costa". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of the printed name.

Isis Barra Costa