

04/15/2023 SB83 Testimony

Michelle L Jantzen

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To Committee chair Senator Jerry Cirino,

I am a registered Ohio Republican voter and mother of 2 children. The younger of the 2 children is a member of the LGBTQ+ community and a rising Senior at a State Institution of higher learning as is mentioned in this bill. My concern as I read this bill is with some vague language that could potentially act as a catalyst to cause the universities of this state to remove support services for these and other students, as these services could be misconstrued as supporting a "political, social, or religious belief" as mentioned in lines 170-173 of SB 83. These support services are vital for the mental health and well-being of the students and it would be disastrous were they to be removed.

In lines 201-208 it states the following:

(5) "State institution of higher education" has the same meaning as in section 3345.011 of the Revised Code.

(B) Not later than ninety days after the effective date of this section, the board of trustees of each state institution of higher education shall adopt a policy that requires the institution to do all of the following:

(1) Prohibit any mandatory programs or training courses regarding diversity, equity, or inclusion;

In a public institution can we make education about diversity, equity, or inclusion mandatory? Maybe or maybe not legally, but what would be the harm in educating the students about the world they live in, the workforce they will be entering once they graduate, the many different types of people that they will work with and how to be accepting of all? The language in this bill seems to suggest they can't even approach the issue with the students. Wouldn't it be helpful to educate students about all groups that are a part of our society to help remove the hate and targeting that happens to some groups?

Lines 650-655 (page 24)

(C) No state institution shall fund, facilitate, or provide any support to any position, material benefit, policy, program, and activity that advantages or disadvantages faculty, staff, or students by any group identity, except that the institution may advantage citizens of the United States or this state.

This section on page 24 states that the university may not fund support groups to the advantage of any student group by identity. Could this vague language also be used as a reason to eliminate individual student support groups at will, even if they aren't funded by the university? It sounds like it could be to me.

I ask and encourage you to please review the language in this bill and adjust language to be more concrete and less open to wild misinterpretation that could cause harm to some students, faculty, and staff unintentionally.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my concerns,

Michelle L Jantzen