

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 Michael Todd Edwards. I'm an education professor at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and a lifelong Ohio resident. I am here to provide testimony against Senate Bill 83 and its companion bill in the Ohio House. The bill is misguided, as it would negatively impact academic collaboration and the valuable cultural exchange between Ohio's public institutions and China. I urge you to consider the consequences of this bill on our academic community, our students, and our global relationships.

I would like to share with you my experiences collaborating with Zheng Yang, a Chinese mathematician, which have greatly enriched both my professional and personal life. Our collaboration began back in 2017 when Zheng reached out to me to better understand the mathematical backgrounds of students that we shared at Miami University. Over a two-week period, we visited 10 different high schools, observed numerous math lessons being taught, and ultimately wrote a paper about our experiences in the *Ohio Journal of School Mathematics*.

Zheng's background and perspective challenged my pedagogical habits, making me a better teacher in the process. His desire to learn and ask questions prompted me to think differently and more critically about the current state of affairs in United States schools. Our relationship has demonstrated the importance of fostering international collaborations for the benefit of our students, our institutions, and our own professional growth. When Zheng moved back to China in 2018, we continued to collaborate, despite geographic barriers.

Working with Zheng has not only improved my teaching but also expanded my knowledge of mathematics and research. We have published articles together, engaged in research projects, and presented at conferences. Our collaboration has helped me better support international students on campus and understand their challenges, such as parental pressure and high-stakes testing. Moreover, Zheng has introduced me to various artificial intelligence tools to explore research-level mathematics, further enhancing my professional growth.

Together, we have explored innovative approaches to teaching, such as using "language-independent" board games to teach problem-solving, proof, and argumentation, while fostering empathy in American students towards those learning English as another language. Our work has directly benefited our students, our institutions, and the broader educational community.

Senate Bill 83 would put an abrupt end to such valuable collaborations. By banning academic and financial relationships with scholars in China, this bill would deprive Ohio's public institutions of the rich cultural exchange and intellectual diversity that are vital to our growth as educators and learners.

Furthermore, this bill could negatively impact the curriculum and learning experiences of our students. Limiting exposure to different ideas and perspectives would hinder their development and ability to think critically and adapt to an increasingly interconnected world. By cutting ties with China, we risk losing the invaluable opportunities that international collaboration offers our students, educators, and society.

In conclusion, I urge you to consider the detrimental effects of Senate Bill 83 on Ohio's academic community and the broader implications for our global relationships. Instead of severing ties with China, we should work together to address the world's most pressing issues, such as climate change, global pandemics, and territorial disputes. We need to have a better understanding of each other's cultures if we want to work together to make the world a better place.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this bill to preserve the invaluable opportunities that international collaboration offers to our students, educators, and society. Thank you for your attention and for taking the time to consider the future of our academic community in Ohio.

I will now take any questions that you have.