

Testimony of Brittany Glenn
Before the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee
Senator Jerry Cirino, Chair
April 19, 2023

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Rulli, Ranking Member Ingram, and Members of the Workforce and Higher Education Committee:

My name is Brittany and I am a master's student with the College of Social Work at the Ohio State University. I am submitting my testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 83. I cannot speak on all these topics, so I will only speak on what I am familiar with as a social work student.

To give some background on the social work profession: social workers exist to help people in need and to address social problems. Looking at this bill through that perspective, it feels very troublesome and irrelevant. For example, line 636 requires that institutions treat all individuals equally. However, Line 650 allows institutions to discriminate against noncitizens of the United States and students who live outside of Ohio.

The ambiguousness and discriminatory language of the bill will leave marginalized and disadvantaged students without needed support from the institution throughout their educational journey.

Additionally, the social work program has never once taught me "what to think". It has always proposed all sides of an argument or stance on a topic and gives us room for free speech and thinking daily. If many of us choose to think "liberally" as you say we do, then so be it. We need to recognize that America now is not the same as it used to be and that is wonderful. We already have plenty of intellectual freedom.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion courses, statements, and programs are necessary due to continued presence of oppression in America. White supremacy, racism, sexism, ableism, etc. have forced us to highlight DEI throughout institutions. I am a military veteran and have met people from all over the United States. I know DEI courses and programs are necessary to unite people together. I took a diversity class in my program – it taught us self-awareness, how to be respectful to people of cultures different from our own, implicit biases, and much more. This program has made me feel better equipped to help EVERY client I will have in my future, even those different from me. Additionally, I classify as a student with a disability and I feel very supported with the inclusion piece of DEI. I feel like OSU cares and that means a lot to someone who suffers from a chronic illness.

I hear a lot of proponents using the word "woke" as if it were a negative thing. Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines "woke" as: "aware of and actively attentive to important societal facts and issues (especially issues of racial and social justice)". Why is being "woke" looked down

upon? It is simply acknowledging and bringing awareness to injustices that exist and have existed for hundreds of years. Also, it is bringing awareness to the fact that equality of opportunity does not always equate to equality of outcomes due to the additional barriers produced by injustices. I see the word equality used a lot in this bill, but we should be more concerned about equity over equality.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to try to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Brittany Glenn