

**Testimony of Victoria “Tori” L. DeLaney, J.D. Candidate 2024, Student of Law at the
University of Cincinnati College of Law**

Before the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee

**April 2023
Written Testimony Only**

Chairman Cirino, Vice Chair Rulli, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for hearing my testimony today opposing Senate Bill 83. My name is Tori DeLaney and I am a law student at the University of Cincinnati College of Law, a member of the LGBTQ+ community, and a student leader. I strongly oppose Senate Bill 83 and its companion bill in the Ohio House. These bills claim to advance educational equality but chill community building, student rights, and access to information that will severely hinder Ohio students.

I joined the legal profession for two reasons: first, you get to continue to learn new things while helping others; second, you get to help others access the law by learning to read it. I am non-binary, neither man nor woman. I use they/them pronouns. Many laws now target people like me and try to erase my existence from social consciousness. This bill would likely say I am a “specified concept” that cannot be supported (endorsed) by my institution. (3345.0217(A)(3), (B)(6)). This bill would allow my peers, my future colleagues, to ignore the reality of my existence. (3345.0217(B)(1)). This bill would forbid my institution from having an LGBTQ+ affinity group, taking away my opportunity and the opportunity of my LGBTQ+ peers to find solace in each other’s experiences. (3345.0217(A)(4)). I urge the committee to reject SB 83 because it undermines students’ ability to find community and may chill students’ ability to community effectively with their peers and institution about their lived experience.

On a less personal note, this bill is self-contradicting. The U.S. Constitution says people could be lawfully imported as goods until 1808¹ and were counted as three-fifths of their peers.² SB 83 demands that institutions not recognize oppressed groups or their oppressors; however, it also demands that institutions teach the U.S. Constitution and allow students to seek truth. Students cannot be denied the chance to grapple with this nation's constitutional oppression of Black Americans through their importation and diminished (3/5th) value compared to others. To deny students this opportunity would be to fabricate the Constitution and deny students access to discovering their own truth. This bill is internally inconsistent and should be terminated.

I implore this committee to reject SB 83 as an individual acutely impacted by it, and as a developing legal professional who must emphasize its logical inconsistencies. Thank you again for your time.

¹ U.S. Const. Art 1, Sect. 9 (stating the “importation of such persons as any State now exists...shall not be prohibited by Congress prior to the year [1808].”)

² U.S. Const. Art. 1, Sect. 2 (A state’s representative numbers shall be determined by adding “the whole number of free Persons [including indentured servants] and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons”).