

Testimony:

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 Mills. I am a Professor and Chair of Materials Science and Engineering at the Ohio State University. I have been a Professor at OSU for 29 years. I have been a proud Buckeye and a true believer in our educational system in Ohio as my two children both went to public schools and eventually received Bachelor's degrees in engineering from OSU. I have never been worried for the future of Higher Education in Ohio until I learned about Senate Bill 83. I would like to make 4 points against passage of this legislation:

- (1) When I started at OSU, there was 1 woman faculty in the Materials Science and Engineering (MSE) department. Today, 15 of our faculty (38 total) are women or from under-represented minority backgrounds. I am proud to say that my department today is in the top 15 amongst all MSE departments in the country. Thus, we have maintained our excellence while providing our students with role models that represent the actual population of the state of Ohio. These positive changes are due to diversity and inclusion initiatives at the College and University levels, and SB 83 will eliminate these initiatives, which will reverse these immensely positive changes.
- (2) Diversity and Inclusion initiatives are embraced by industry in Ohio, and across the US. My industry colleagues advocate that diversity and inclusion is GOOD for business. SB 83 will put Colleges in Ohio at odds with our industry colleagues and will not prepare our students to join this modern workforce.
- (3) Many federal programs which fund the research in engineering fields require that faculty creatively participate in outreach efforts to engage students (from K-12 to college students) from diverse backgrounds. These efforts introduce engineering as a career path to these young students, and I firmly believe that this is good for the young people of Ohio. SB 83 will not allow our faculty to pursue these initiatives and will eliminate our faculty from many of the most prestigious research funding sources such as the National Science Foundation, Department of Energy, Department of Defense, and National Institutes of Health. As a result, OSU and other state universities will lose not only research funding, but also many of our best and productive faculty members, to other states where restrictions on these student diversity outreach efforts are not being outlawed.
- (4) Students from China and Iran have come to OSU seeking opportunities as both undergraduate and graduate students. Most of these students, who learn in parallel with our domestic students, remain in the US to become citizens and work in our industries, national labs, and academia. They are a source of incredible strength and ingenuity which has made our educational system the envy of the world. SB 83 will effectively kill the engine for innovation that these students provide, telling these students that they are no longer welcome in Ohio.

I implore you to consider my testimony and vote NO on SB 83. It will irreparably harm higher education in Ohio and the competitiveness of our students and our state in fields such as Engineering.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.