

S.B. 83 Testimony - Zach Graves

My name is Zach Graves. I am a student studying Political Science at Kent State University. I also serve as one of the First-year Interns for Kent State's Undergraduate Student Government. I am here today to speak on the dangers of S.B. 83, how it will impact me as a student, as well as how it will impact my community as a whole. As a student, the implications of this bill are far-reaching and overbearing. In college, students are supposed to be challenged to think about new ideas, new mindsets, and participate in healthy debates. One of the main harms to my education as a student attending a public university is the effect of so-called "intellectual diversity" requirement, which forces a biased viewpoint onto students in classrooms, onto policies regarding classroom instruction, onto admissions policies, onto hiring policies, and onto tenure practices. Discussions of race, culture, and identity in the classroom are considered "controversial beliefs," which not only prevents me from learning about other identities, but it dismisses the experiences of people who experience bias and prejudice. Controlling what I learn in the classroom is yet another government overreach from Ohio State Senate Republicans.

Outside of school, this bill will impact me as a community member. As a member of the LGBTQ+ community, I strongly condemn this bill's ban on groups, clubs, and organizations that are based on race, sex, sexuality, and gender identity at public universities. At my university, we have an LGBTQ+ Center, which provides support, resources, and a place of togetherness for students in the LGBTQ+ community. If this bill becomes a law, the LGBTQ+ Center will cease to exist. Countless students, friends of mine, who utilize their space, their resources, and their knowledge will have nowhere to go, which will likely increase rates of depression and anxiety

amongst LGBTQ+ students. S.B. 83 is not only bad for higher education, but it is bad for the university community as a whole.

This bill is dangerous, and as a constituent of Senator Cirino, I strongly condemn moving forward with S.B. 83, and I urge all elected officials to truly think about the negative implications of advancing this bill and rethink your support of S.B. 83. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Zachary Graves
Student at Kent State University