



## **Opposition Testimony to Senate Bill 83** *SB83 is bad for students, higher education, and Ohio.*

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

My name is Rick Lucas and I am honored to serve as the Vice President of the Ohio Nurses Association, the voice of Ohio's 180,000 Registered Nurses since 1904.

The Ohio Nurses Association is a strong community of union and non-union registered nurses who are dedicated to protecting and advancing the profession and impacting healthcare in Ohio.

I stand before you today to express my opposition to the Ohio Higher Education Enhancement Act, which I believe is BAD for students, BAD for higher education, and BAD for Ohio. Furthermore, Senate Bill 83 is bad for nurses and the patients we care for here in Ohio.

Ohio is home to 14 public universities, 24 regional campuses, and 23 public colleges, all of which serve as the backbone to serving the more than 480,000 students of our state's higher education system. SB 83 would negatively impact the educational experience of all these students by introducing various unnecessary and harmful measures.

At least 27 unions representing thousands of Ohio faculty members would be affected by the proposed language in SB 83 that would bar campus employees from striking when negotiating their contracts with the administration. By adding faculty to the list of public employees who aren't allowed to strike in Ohio, SB 83 will undermine the rights of faculty members to negotiate for better working conditions and fair compensation, which ultimately impacts the quality of education that students receive.

At least 11 Ohio public colleges and universities have current partnerships with Chinese institutions. These partnerships include relationships with Chinese high schools and colleges to recruit students to Ohio colleges, study abroad and exchange programs, and dual enrollment programs. However, if SB 83 passes in its current form banning partnerships between Ohio public colleges and Chinese institutions, the quality of education at our beloved Ohio State University would be negatively impacted and it will limit opportunities for students and faculty.



Also, SB 83 would require Ohio's public colleges and universities to implement a three-credit hour American government or American history course requirement for all students seeking an associate or bachelor's degree, beginning with the Class of 2027. This mandate ignores students' diverse interests and needs and undermines the academic freedom of institutions and faculty members. The proposal appears superfluous and redundant since many of us have already acquired this knowledge through our public school education.

Finally, Senate Bill 83 is bad for Ohio's nurses. Ohio is already facing a patient care crisis in our hospitals and nursing homes. As the Ohio Nurses Association works with members of the General Assembly to address the nurse staffing shortage, this bill could discourage prospective nursing from attending Ohio's public colleges and universities which are critical to our nurse staffing pipeline. Additionally, with the loss of their bargaining power combined with unnecessary red tape from Columbus bureaucrats, more nurse educators are likely to leave higher education in Ohio to find more lucrative health careers.

In conclusion, I urge the Ohio Senate Higher Education Committee to oppose the Ohio Higher Education Enhancement Act. This bill is BAD for students, BAD for higher education, and BAD for Ohio.

Let us work together to prioritize our students' and institutions' needs and interests and promote excellence in higher education.

Thank you.