

My name is Emily Lohmann, and I am a graduate student in the school psychology program at the University of Dayton. I am currently in my internship year, working full time in the K-12 public school system as a school psychologist. I am here to express my deep concern with Senate Bill 83, specifically regarding the implications of limiting diversity equity and inclusion work in higher education. Not only does this threaten students' ability to self-reflect on their own lived experiences and perspectives, but it would promote echo chambers within academia. If your intention is to broaden the ideas shared in the higher education classroom, please understand that this legislation would do the exact opposite. If we do not prioritize input from diverse populations, we will be blind to others' perspectives and lack skills to effectively work with those with differing backgrounds from our own.

As an individual who had limited access to diverse perspectives during my youth and adolescence, I needed training that opened my eyes to others' perspectives to be able to serve students that I work with today. The students in Ohio's K-12 schools are incredibly diverse and it is critical that those who work to improve the lives of students develop a deep understanding of these differences. Understanding diverse perspectives helps me effectively work with students from different backgrounds in conducting special education evaluations and delivering counseling. This, in turn, impacts academic and mental/behavioral health outcomes for Ohio citizens, which is currently a significant priority for Governor DeWine's office. Diversity, equity, and inclusion provides a space for individuals who have *different perspectives* to share their life experiences. Only then can students have effective and purposeful discussion to learn, grow, and prepare to work in our ever-diversifying society.

SB 83 directly threatens the nine school psychology programs in the state of Ohio. If this bill passes, school psychology programs would lose national approval, resulting in no licensable school psychologists in the state. Clearly this would dramatically worsen the national and state-wide school psychologist shortage. For those who are wondering what a school psychologist is, and why it matters if we have school psychology graduate programs: a school psychologist plays an imperative role in evaluations for special education services in any K-12 school that receives federal funding. Without school psychologists to manage the evaluation process to ensure students with disabilities have access to a free and appropriate education, it would be impossible for schools to meet federal mandates to educate all students. In short, schools would no longer meet the rights of students with disabilities and provide them education, making districts vulnerable to massive lawsuits, per the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act. This act provides a large percentage of funding to public schools. If this bill passes, school districts will not be able to meet the needs of their students with disabilities, leading to expensive lawsuits, lack of funding, and a domino effect resulting in a failure of the public education system. I'm fearful to think of the detriment this will have on children who no longer have access to an education.