

Opponent Testimony for Senate Bill 83
Senate Committee on Workforce and Higher Education
April 19, 2023

Jamie Reed
The Ohio State University

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Rulli, Ranking Member Ingram, and Members of the Workforce and Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Jamie Reed.

I am a senior honors student at The Ohio State University, and I have lived in Columbus my entire life. I am the President of the Student Advocates for Sexual Health Awareness at OSU, I am studying Environmental Policy and Decision Making, and I am a queer person that uses they/them pronouns.

Because of my identity and education, Senate Bill 83 is incredibly concerning to me. Most of my defining characteristics fall under the “controversial belief” section of this bill, as well as a large percentage of Ohio State students.

This bill would prevent me from being able to pursue graduate education in the fields that I am passionate about, and it will drastically change the trajectory of students within my college, the School of Environment and Natural Resources. Climate change has been the most prominent subject in my education. I assure you, my education in this topic has been focused on research, not opinion. Young Americans are the most active about this issue because our future is going to be the most impacted; this passion is visible among my classmates. We want a safe, healthy planet for us to raise families in just like our older elected officials have already been able to. As President of a Public Health organization, I have seen first-hand how education on topics of health and reproductive rights can change perspectives of students; allowing them to lead healthier lives. This has shaped me as a person, but this bill would jeopardize the future of my organization. Banning DEI trainings will help foster hostile environments for marginalized people, opening the door for more discriminatory policies to be passed. As a queer trans person, this bill makes me very scared for my future in Ohio.

As previously mentioned, this bill would severely impact myself and my classmates through deeming climate change as too controversial to be taught about. I am a student worker at OSU, and getting rid of DEI trainings would make me feel much less safe being myself at work, in class, and on campus. Myself and my queer, marginalized friends do not deserve to have this recognition of understanding taken from us. My brother is autistic, and DEI trainings do not include mental disabilities, and he has been suffering from job insecurity for years because employers do not understand him. Extending this to people of color, queer people, and women would be a great injustice for Ohioans within public universities.

Myself and people like me in Ohio public universities will be incredibly negatively impacted by the passage of Senate Bill 83. Queer and marginalized students should be allowed to learn about their identities and history, not just those that are decided on by our elected officials. Please, I ask that you consider my testimony and vote no on Senate Bill 83.

Thank you for your time.

Jamie Reed