

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

Benjamin Gomez, Undergraduate Student
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 Benjamin Gomez.

I am an undergraduate student at The Ohio State University. I study political science and follow politics closely. I am writing to you today to express my opposition to House Bill 83. This bill is a gross exaggeration of governing power and will result in catastrophic consequences for the state of Ohio. I humbly urge this legislative body to fully consider all testimony before an attempt to pass this bill.

I am enrolled in the Morrill Scholars Program at OSU. This program has a rich history of fighting for diversity, equity, and inclusion at the university, and has not stopped since its inception. As a member of this program and the Latine community, I find that the removal of DEI programs is unacceptable and will lead to many students, like myself, feeling very excluded, unheard, and unsafe on campus. I have met many of my friends through this program and even written an article in the school's Latine newspaper expressing my love for Ohio State and its appreciation for our communities. Furthermore, my mother is a teacher, who is part of a labor union. My health insurance comes from this union, and without it, our family would have a tough time finding affordable healthcare. My mother is one of the hardest working people I know. She cares for her students greatly and spends much of her time outside of school ensuring that her students have a good life at home, or working to find a better way to connect with them in the classroom.

If this bill is passed, families like mine will suffer. They will suffer socially, economically, and legally. The removal of these DEI programs will not only discourage students from attending Ohio schools, but will also create less diverse campuses, cut off access to scholarships, and destroy any sense of belonging. These programs are integral to our society. They allow us to celebrate diversity in every facet of our lives. Abolishing them will certainly lead to a further distrust in our state legislature, as well as increasing tensions between different ethnic/racial communities. America is built on the foundation of equality for all, and creating an equitable society is an important component of that

notion. Additionally, the abolishment of collective bargaining will be disastrous for Ohio. We will see the quality of teaching drop, as well as lower test scores, and an increase in crime due to a lack of community connection for schools. These effects are extremely dangerous and would all be caused by the passage of this bill.

I implore the state legislation to remove this bill from consideration of being passed. We cannot allow these laws to be brought in effect into Ohio. It will have disastrous consequences for the working class and marginalized communities of Ohio, which do not receive much help from the state legislation anyway. My family and millions of other families will be detrimentally affected by the passage of this bill. I urge the state legislation to please throw this bill out. Thank you for your time and effort listening to my testimony.