

Testimony of Jennifer Meakins, MArch

Before the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee

Senator Jerry Cirino, Chair

April 18, 2023

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

My name is Jennifer Meakins, and I am a professor of Architecture at Kent State University, in Kent, Ohio, where I have taught for three years. I do not represent Kent State, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 83.

As a university-level educator, I vehemently oppose Senate Bill 83. One of the tenets of education is teaching our students to critically think and assess the world around them. Knowledge of their world, both positive and negative aspects, is an essential part of that education. I would not be doing my job if I did not teach my architecture students, and future builders of our world, about racial segregation in urban planning policies, the spatial consequences of gendered restrooms, or the role of state architecture in enforcing centuries of power. The ability to use their voice, for or against our curriculum is only useful if they have all the information, the facts, and Senate Bill 83 would strip our students of their right to learn. Our state institutions would be irreparably harmed by the implementation of every aspect of this bill, our reputations would suffer, our students would suffer, and eventually our economy would suffer. It is not for a partisan government to determine what should be taught in our disciplines, it is for those actually in classrooms, the studios, and the labs. I implore you to reconsider this bill. Thank you for the consideration.