

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

Thank you for allowing me to submit this written testimony. My name is Alex Poling, and I am an Ohio State student majoring in Environmental Policy and Decision Making. I also represent students in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences in our Undergraduate Student Government. I am strongly opposed to Senate Bill 83 and its companion bill in the Ohio House.

Among the many dangerous things in this bill, one of them is its assertion that climate change is a controversial topic. Anyone in my college, be them students, staff, or faculty, would agree that this assertion goes against everything we know from decades of scientific research, including world-class research conducted at the Byrd Polar and Climate Research Center on our own campus. That's because climate change isn't controversial, and it isn't political either. The fact that the climate is changing, and that it's caused by human forces, has been scientific consensus for years, and the evidence has only gotten stronger since then. To treat it otherwise is blatantly anti-science and makes a mockery of the research happening at Ohio's universities. I fear what would happen to the reputations of our research universities as well as the quality of research coming out of this state if this bill were to pass.

The restrictions on diversity and inclusion trainings and activities are also very concerning to me. Even as a white student, I feel that I have benefitted greatly from both mandatory and optional diversity and inclusion activities at Ohio State. I have never been made to feel lesser for my race or any other identities during any of these activities, and I have never felt like any of my instructors were trying to push certain beliefs on me. The fact is that most Ohio students are part of some marginalized group (women, people of color, LGBTQ+ people, disabled people, etc.), and even those that aren't benefit from learning about the diversity of the human experience.

If this bill seeks to serve students, it is woefully misled. This bill will only harm students as well as every faculty and staff member and Ohio's universities. I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this dangerous bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.