

Testimony of Amrita Dhar, PhD, Assistant Professor of English at The Ohio State University
Before the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee
Senator Jerry Cirino, Chair
19 April 2023

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

My name is Amrita Dhar and I am a professor of English Literature at The Ohio State University, where I have taught for almost 5 years. I do not represent my institution, but rather am submitting testimony as a concerned citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 83. I do, however, speak as a longtime educator and lifelong advocate for free speech and diversity of ideas.

I see SB 83 as fully and violently impeding academic freedom and therefore oppose it wholeheartedly.

Let me name also only three points on which I feel strongly about. The realities of 1. white privilege, 2. inequities of power as faced by BIPOC communities and disabled communities and queer communities, and 3. necessary recognition of and work to halt climate change are all well documented in scientific and academic work today. I want to be clear that to call diversity training or discussion of climate change “controversial” is to be part of the problem, not the solution.

I also condemn SB 83’s attack on academic tenure and on collective bargaining.

Again, I wholeheartedly oppose SB 83, which I can only see as Ohio’s Anti-Education Bill, and which, if passed, will cause irreparable harm to students of all stripes in Ohio now and for long years into the future.