

Testimony on SB 83 from:

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I write to strongly oppose Senate Bill 83. I am an Associate Professor of Political Science at OSU, where I have served on the faculty for 10 years.

I oppose the bill because while it claims to protect academic freedom and freedom of expression, it undercuts these purported aims by mandating specific courses be taught (the American government course requirement) and specific readings be included in specific courses (requiring faculty to assign the United States Constitution, Declaration of Independence, five essays from the Federalist Papers, the Emancipation Proclamation, Gettysburg Address, and Letter from Birmingham Jail by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.). Faculty instructors have trained for years as experts in their respective fields, and they are thus in the best position to design courses and determine course requirements within their departments.

I also oppose the provisions related to undermining the promotion of diversity, equity, and inclusion. While the bill claims to promote intellectual diversity, it specifically denigrates and severely limits efforts to promote an inclusive intellectual environment by prohibiting investments and initiatives related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Existing DEI efforts are already aimed at protecting and promoting intellectual diversity.

The bill, if passed, would also severely undermine OSU's academic excellence. OSU is a world-renowned institution of higher education that currently attracts the very best scholars from around the world. If SB83 is passed into law, it will become very difficult to attract the best scholars because of uncertainty about job security currently afforded by tenure protections. The vague post-tenure review requirements undercut academic freedom and will certainly result in "brain drain" of scholars out of Ohio and severely undercut the ability to attract top talent to the state institutions.

Overall, the quality of higher education in Ohio will be negatively impacted by the political interference that SB83 would introduce. I urge all Ohio State Senators to oppose SB83 and allow our state institutions to continue to fulfill their missions.