

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

My name is Maggie Ballard, and I am a third year student at Miami University. I do not represent Miami University, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 83.

Our student population desperately needs DEI training to be made aware of experiences other than their own. A large majority of individuals at this university are upper class and white. They are unaware of the struggles of minorities and those with other perspectives and experiences than their own. I firmly believe that without this kind of training, space will not be made for those in the minority community.

I have been a teaching assistant for multiple first year experience courses, which is essentially an extension of orientation that first year students take here at Miami. In my experience with these courses, I have seen first hand students having realizations about their own privileges and how they may be unintentionally committing microaggressions on fellow students without even realizing it. I have seen exactly how important it is that DEI training is utilized in the university setting. Banning mandatory training would be a misuse of resources and a disservice to all university students in Ohio. There are real problems in higher education that we need to address: increased tuition and debt, student retention and completion, and reductions in academic programs and full-time faculty positions. SB 83 gets at none of that, and will do nothing to add value to our colleges and universities.

Respectfully, I ask that you reject this bill, which could do real, irreversible damage to Ohio higher education. Thank you for taking the time to read my message.