

Opponent Testimony for Senate Bill 83
Senate Committee on Workforce and Higher Education
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University

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Taylor Urbina.

I am a first-generation, minority, second year student at The Ohio State University, attending the university on a scholarship generously awarded by The Ohio State University, Office of Diversity & Inclusion's, Young Scholars Program. I reside in on-campus housing at Ohio State University, and work on campus as a Student Administrative Assistant, as well as a Student-Athlete Tutor, and a Teachers' Aid with ChildCare Careers in the Columbus area. I am here expressing concern about Senate Bill 83, and the impacts that this bill will not only have on my personal life, but also on my peers, my family, and all first-generation, minority students coming after me.

I am attending The Ohio State University on a fully funded scholarship due to my advanced academic abilities I have displayed since the 6th grade. I have been a part of The Young Scholars Program with The Ohio State University since the 6th grade, participating in college readiness workshops, mental health development programs, writing and mathematic workshops, as well as financial management workshops once a month, 12 months a year. Being a first-generation, minority student, I have had no one in my life to look up to as a positive example of how to pursue a college education, as well as no one to look up to as successful in getting our family out of our poor, unsafe, and rundown neighborhood of Toledo, Ohio. Being a part of the Young Scholars Program through Ohio State has given me the tools and resources I, and my family, needed to understand the college application process, and the work required to be put in to be successful in college, which I have done thus far. The Office of Diversity & Inclusion gave me a family outside of my own that I could feel comfortable in and learn from. I would not be the straight-A, 4.0 GPA, involved, and community driven student I am today without DEI Programs such as these, and I can honestly say that without the resources provided to me by these wonderful groups of people, I may not even be alive today.

Not only am I a part of The Young Scholars Program with The Office of Diversity & Inclusion, but so are my older sister, Kali Urbina, and my younger brother, Ricky Urbina. My sister, Kali, graduated from The Ohio State University in May of 2021 with a bachelor's degree in the Sport Industry, and now holds a management position with the Arizona Cardinals of the National Football League. My younger brother, Ricky, is an incoming freshman at Ohio State, and as a member of the Young Scholars Program for

the past 6 years, he has been exposed to numerous opportunities to further his educational experiences, and gain leadership roles in the community, working as a firefighter's assistant, as well as being the Student Advocate for S.M.A.R.T.S., a high school group that works at the district level in Toledo, Ohio. Families like mine would not be successful without diversity, equity, and inclusion groups such as the Young Scholars Program in higher education. Families like mine; poor, undereducated, single-parent families living in poverty would be forced to succumb to our poor surroundings without the assistance of academic programs such as those offered by The Ohio State University. I am grateful for my opportunity to share and give my knowledge to the community of Columbus and Ohio State, and I would love for others like me to have that opportunity with all their hard academic efforts.

I am testifying today to ask to amend the bill to encourage and not prohibit the incorporation of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion programs in Ohio Higher Education. I can confidently say that without these programs, without the support of first-generation, minority, LGBTQ+, and financially disadvantaged students at The Ohio State University, and at the state level, I would not be here today, as the successful student I am. If we as a community lose these groups, we lose the heart and soul of what makes college and universities great; the freedom to express yourself as you are, the privilege of furthering your education with diverse knowledge, and the ability to work together for a better future. Thank you for your time.