



WORKFORCE AND
HIGHER EDUCATION
COMMITTEE

Witness Form

Today's Date 4/18/2023

Name: Tom Roberts

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Organization Representing: Ohio Conference NAACP

Testifying on Bill Number: SB 83

Testimony: Verbal Written Both

Testifying As: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist? Yes No

Special Requests: _____

My name is Tom Roberts, and I stand before you today as the President of the Ohio Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. It is my belief that if passed, Senate Bill 83 would be a drastic step in the wrong direction for all Ohioans. The NAACP envisions an inclusive community rooted in liberation where all persons can exercise their civil and human rights without discrimination. We are committed to a world without racism where Black people enjoy equitable opportunities in thriving communities.

In regards to SB 83, the question that I believe we all have to ask ourselves today is what legacy would we like to leave for our children, grandchildren, and future generations to come. Do we want the State of Ohio to be a place where diversity is celebrated, or one which places unnecessary restrictions on our institutions of higher education under the guise of racial neutrality. This bill undercuts proactive efforts to ensure that students feel safe, supported, and in an environment that promotes civic understanding and racial equity.

This legislation will have a chilling effect on the Black student experience at colleges and universities because it will prohibit the university support for programs which have successfully increased Black student recruitment and retention, Black alumni engagement, and increased understanding of experiences impacted by race both historically as well as present day.

What Black parent would want to send their son or daughter to a school that:

- bans required DEI training;
- bans public statement and positions about “controversial” topics;
- bans programs, policies, and practices based on race, sex, gender, sexuality, and gender identity; and
- Bans groups, clubs, and organizations based on race, sex, sexuality, and gender identity.

Our colleges and universities are supposed to provide a training ground, where free speech is encouraged, diversity of thought is supported, and where young minds are molded to prepare themselves for adulthood. If passed this bill would ensure that none of the above would be allowed on Ohio campuses. For these reasons and many more, I implore this body to vote NO on SB 83.