

Written Testimony of Patricia Sieber
Before the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee
Senator Jerry Cirino, Chair
Submitted April 18, 2023 for April 19, 2023 Hearing on HB 83

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Patricia Sieber. I do not speak on behalf of any institution, but as a concerned citizen. I wish to voice my strong opposition to Senate Bill HB 83 and its companion bill in the Ohio House.

In a professional capacity, I am the former director of Title VI National Resource Center/Foreign Area and Language Studies East Asian Studies Center at The Ohio State University (OSU) funded through competitive grants by the US Department of Education.

During my tenure as Center director (2005-2013), under the auspices of OSU's Office of Government Relations, I met with the aides of the Ohio congressional delegation in Washington, DC to impress upon all members, regardless of their party affiliation, the importance of continued investment in expanding foreign language and area expertise in order to train future leaders in a host of arenas, including government, business, education, media, and the non-profit sector.


As part of such advanced training, in-country experience is invaluable. As research on foreign language study shows, when immersed in a foreign language environment on a day-to-day basis, students' proficiency does not increase in a linear fashion, but it grows exponentially toward the end of a long-term sojourn.

Therefore, it was with great dismay that I learned of the provisions in HB 83 to prohibit academic relationships with institutions in the People's Republic of China. De facto, this will make it impossible for The Ohio State University and other public institutions of its kind to have sustained study abroad programs there, since typically, education abroad is contingent on international educational cooperation between universities.

Over the years, I have observed how such education abroad experiences not only offered our students advanced language training, but allowed them to become familiar with Chinese teaching and research on diverse subjects, ranging from Chinese theater to Chinese medicine, wastewater treatment, and internet technologies. In addition, as many recent reports have noted, the People's Republic of China is becoming a powerhouse in many advanced fields of knowledge. Thus students from Ohio stand to gain broad expertise of all sorts through study abroad experiences.

Accordingly, if public institutions in Ohio truly want to prepare the next generations of learners and leaders for the 21st century, it would seem to be very shortsighted, if not outright cruel, to interfere with our students' ability to pursue valuable learning opportunities abroad. In other words, a bill that professes to value "intellectual diversity" cannot in good faith isolate the study of China in the People's Republic of China as a no-go zone.

Hence, I strongly urge to drop these provisions from HB 83. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia Sieber".

Patricia Sieber