

April 15, 2023

Dear Senator:

My name is Lis Regula, and as an employee at the University of Dayton in Dayton, Ohio, I urge you to reject SB 83. To briefly summarize some of my many concerns:

**Democracy and Higher Education:** The bill *at its core* threatens the fundamentals of democratic life, where institutions of higher education offer a key space for debate and dialogue that are critically important for the functioning of society. If passed, it would silence dissenting voices that are necessary for a robust democracy and give a dangerous impression that such direct ideological control of higher education by the government is acceptable.

**Ambiguity and Uncertainty:** The bill is ambiguous and riddled with contradictions that will make compliance unverifiable and unprovable, if not completely impossible. This will create a disproportionate imbalance between how the law will impact those advocating ‘popular’ and ‘unpopular’ opinions respectively.

**Punitive Requirement:** The bill would require universities to create and impose “sanctions” on anyone deemed to be in violation of SB 83. This would undoubtedly have a chilling effect and contradict the alleged purpose of the Bill to protect those with unpopular viewpoints. Such an office could easily be misused and become a source of further fear, conflict, and polarization.

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Ban:** The bill targets for suppression precisely some of the most important topics (such as gender, race, historical understanding, immigration policy, climate change, electoral politics and its (dis)functions) that the country and the world is facing right now, and thereby hobbles our ability to develop critical knowledge and perspective-taking skills on exactly these issues with the rising generation of leaders. The bill also directly contributes to anti-Asian sentiment; it contains a deeply troubling section banning any “partnerships” with the People’s Republic of China which is specifically defined within the bill as potentially including a ban on interacting with students from China and their parents.

**Impingement on Classroom Dynamics:** The bill would require student evaluations to ask directly if a classroom was “free of bias.” This will have significant complications for any faculty who teach DEI topics that address questions of race, gender, etc. in any way, hamstringing their ability to confront students with uncomfortable truths. It will disincentivize teaching “sensitive” topics through dialogue rather than lecture or allowing for free discussion in the classroom because one cannot guarantee that incidents perceived as “bias” will not occur. Research shows that white students disproportionately view faculty of color as “biased,” so this required revision would increase the existing well-evidenced problem of racial bias in student evaluations.

**Mandate to Post Syllabi on the Internet:** While this raises serious questions about our intellectual property rights, it is also a violation of the sanctity of the pedagogical space and process, which are critical to foster meaningful relationships with students. Furthermore, it is clearly an attempt at intimidation of intellectual freedom through the threat of mob response. Faculty who teach on topics that are widely misunderstood, or which have been used as a political “football,” will find themselves exposed to direct risk of harassment and worse. This mandate is a complete violation of our right to privacy, regardless of the topics we teach.

For these reasons and many others, I ask that you not support this legislation.

Sincerely,  
Lis Regula, Ph.D.  
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