

Workforce and Higher Education Committee
Opposition Testimony for SB 83
April 19, 2023
Submitted by Ann Shroyer

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 Ann Shroyer. I am a resident of Westerville but grew up in a small community in NW Ohio and graduated from the University of Toledo. I am strongly opposed to Senate Bill 83 and its companion bill in the Ohio House.

This bill is an attack on our public universities here in Ohio. As a graduate of the state university system at the University of Toledo, I never expected that 25 years later that “controversial concepts” - which could seemingly shapeshift based on administration here in Ohio - would be prohibited. I took a course on Poverty and Income Distribution and a course on Women in American History - would those be considered “controversial concepts” and prohibited under these laws or require a rebuttal lesson on how amazingly equitable our country has been for women (let’s be honest, white women) who didn’t even receive the right to vote for 150 years and policies that had been in the constitution of this country to define the percentage of a citizen a person was based on race.

I will defer to the educational professionals who are here testifying in opposition to this bill for the detailed reasons on why this bill is offensive, wrong for Universities, wrong for University professors and administration, wrong for University students. If the goal of this bill is to continue Ohio on a path of de-education where science and scientific method is not valued and actively destroyed by members of this legislature, where “experts” who believe vaccines make us magnetic are invited to speak by legislators, you make us a laughingstock. We have lost 3 congressional seats in the past 2 census. Our population tracks as less educated, less healthy, and older than most of the states in the U.S. Bills like this will only continue that trend as more young people will leave for their college education.

Our state has been hemorrhaging young people for years. I was one of those young people who left nearly 20 years ago - before I needed readers to read testimony in a hearing. I came back recently to be closer to family - but I worry about the environment of hate, anti-intellectualism, anti-inclusivity, anti-fairness that my son experiences in this state. I do not want him to learn lessons that this bill would seek to elevate. I attended a high school in this state decades ago where I heard hate speech almost daily, where a high school teacher used racial and homophobic and sexist slurs in class, and I look back with some shame that I never spoke up at the time. I had hoped when I moved my son back to my home state, I would not have to worry about about a return to such a mindset being tolerated, and yet - this bill would seek to almost require a both sides mentality where a voice could once again be given to such hate speech on a college campus this time.

This bill is wrong for Ohio. Please do not give anymore time, and vote no on SB83. Our young people and our Universities deserve better.

Thank you.