

Opponet Testimony of Cameron Hill
Senate Bill 83
Ohio Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee
April 18, 2023

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Rulli, Ranking Member Ingram, and all members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today.

My name is Cameron Hill and I am a lifelong resident of Ohio, and current student at The Ohio State University. I am majoring in Public Policy with a specialization in Education Policy. I grew up not far from here in Zanesville, Ohio. I witnessed countless times of how people from minority communities were treated, and I began to realize what Diversity, Equity and Inclusion meant to me. Respectfully, I do not know if some of you truly understand the meaning behind Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Although I say this as a man who grew up with more blessings than I can count, I still understand the meaning of these principles. I never had to fear being discriminated against because of my skin color. However, I have experienced discrimination because of who I love. I am a gay man who did not come out until my senior year of high school. I am alive today because of educators who valued me as a person, and did not let my sexuality change their thoughts on me. They valued our differences and taught us to love each other, not because we were different, but because we were all unique in our own way.

Fast forward three years, and here I am at Ohio State. Coming to Ohio State was the best decision I could have ever made. I am part of a university who truly values who I am inside and outside of the classroom. DEI initiatives have welcomed me with open arms into the Buckeye Community. I feel welcomed and safe at Ohio State, regardless of who I love or my political ideology. In all of my classes where we discuss the issues that are currently facing our state and nation, never once have I had a professor push their beliefs onto me. Every single day we discuss the policy that you all work on, and we have always discussed it in a safe fair and non-partisan way. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is not in place to make superiority statements, but rather to teach us all to acknowledge our differences, and love each other through them. I encourage you all today to look into your hearts and put yourselves in my shoes. I lived 18 years of my life in fear that my friends, teachers, and family wouldnt love me for who I am, but because of DEI, I feel loved, safe and comfortable in my own skin.

This bill would make coming to Ohio for college, or staying here after graduation extremely unappealing. So many students that come to Ohio State are **embarrassed** to tell people they willingly came to Ohio, and they already plan to leave after graduation. Anywhere from 10-40% of college graduates leave Ohio following graduation. They leave because of low opportunity, low income, and bad policy. **This is not how we fix Higher Education in Ohio.** Furthermore, 25% of students at Ohio State are part of a minority community. This bill will not make us

disappear. We will fight to be represented and valued at our institutions of learning. Ohio ranks 35th in the nation for higher education, yet this bill doesn't even aim to improve that. **Again, This bill is NOT how we fix Higher Ed in Ohio.**

This bill is BAD for students, BAD for our universities and BAD for Ohio. DEI principles have changed my life and made me comfortable in my own skin. DEI is not indoctrination, it is loving your neighbor. I encourage you all to vote in a way that would love and honor your neighbor. Thank you for your time. I am prepared for any questions you may have for me.