

Testimony

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Rulli, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Workforce and Higher Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you all today. My name is Jaylene Canales, I am a third-year Ohio State Student and I am testifying on behalf of Alpha Psi Lambda National Fraternity Incorporated. I would like to today express my vehement opposition to Senate Bill 83: The Ohio Higher Education Enhancement Act, for the damage I believe it is capable of causing to Latino students throughout Ohio.

Latinos constitute only 4.2% of Ohio's population today overall. At Ohio State 5.4% of the students enrolled identify as Hispanic or Latino. As a single digit percentage of the population at both the state and university level, the needs of Latinos are often overlooked. For this reason my primary concern is the provision that prohibits policies that promote any ideology that classifies individuals within identity groups, divides identity groups into oppressed and oppressors, and prescribes advantages, disadvantages, or segregation based upon identity group membership.

I grew up in Ohio, the daughter of Mexican and Honduran immigrants, being well aware of my marginality as part of Ohio's 4.2% Latino population. At the end of my time in High School I was fortunate enough to be selected into the Morrill Scholarship Program, a diversity initiative at Ohio State, without which I would not have been able to afford to enroll in a four-year bachelor's degree program. I came to The Ohio State University knowing I would continue to exist within the margins as Hispanics consist only 5.4% of Ohio State's Columbus Campus. With this minority status in mind I sought community within organizations such as Ladies of Leadership, Latinx Student Association, Queer Latine Community Pride Association, and Alpha Psi Lambda National Fraternity Incorporated, as they were all organizations that

helped me find other individuals who shared my experiences and to feel less isolated at an institution where very few spaces allowed me to express myself and my identity. To be quite frank, without the support and community these organizations provided me, I do not believe I would have made it as far into my college career as I have today.

I believe, for the reasons I have outlined previously, that The Ohio Higher Education Enhancement Act would harm Latino College students within the state of Ohio. If the Ohio Senate is as opposed to segregation in higher education as they purport, it would be against its best interest to vote for Senate Bill 83, as it makes higher education inaccessible and isolating for minority students by potentially eliminating initiatives, scholarships, and organizations designed to include them. Thank you all for the opportunity to speak today. I, and all members of Alpha Psi Lambda, will continue to follow this bill closely.