

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 Martin Dupont. I am an immigrant, a US citizen, a father, and I am voicing my concerns today, on behalf of the future of this country, our children.

I am strongly opposed to Senate Bill 83 and its companion bill in the Ohio House. Opposing Senate Bill 83 is crucial because it would directly impact academic freedoms and limit the ability of educators to provide a well-rounded education to students. The bill proposes several measures that would ban mandatory diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training and programs.

By limiting academic freedom, Senate Bill 83 would undermine the ability of educators to provide students with diverse perspectives and challenge them to think critically about complex issues. It would also limit the ability of students to engage in important conversations around DEI, social justice, and other relevant topics that are essential to prepare them for success in a diverse and interconnected world.

The threat of performance evaluations, tenure, and state funding as consequences of violating this bill could lead to a culture of fear and self-censorship among educators, which is antithetical to the principles of academic freedom and the pursuit of knowledge. Moreover, diversity and inclusion education is crucial in creating a welcoming and inclusive campus environment where all students feel valued and respected. Removing diversity and inclusion education from higher education could lead to a lack of awareness and understanding of the challenges that marginalized groups face, which could further marginalize these groups and perpetuate systemic inequalities.

In conclusion, Senate Bill 83 poses a significant threat to academic freedom, intellectual diversity, and the ability of educators to provide students with a well-rounded education. We must prioritize protecting academic freedom and the pursuit of knowledge, and work to strengthen, not weaken, higher education in Ohio.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this dangerous bill that will keep us from growing into the country we aspire to be.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Martin Dupont