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Chairman Cirino, Vice Chair Rulli, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee,

Good afternoon. Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Lane, I am a sophomore Integrated Social Studies Major at Kent State University. I strongly oppose Senate Bill 83 and its companion bill in the Ohio House.

Our mission is to make our country the best it could possibly be, but we can not achieve that title if we shelter our citizens from the social and political issues that are happening and the social and political issues that have happened in our country, which is what this bill would do. We have to make ‘controversial’ and ‘uncomfortable’ conversations within classrooms so people can feel the true density of the topic. But the ideas that this bill is surrounded by is why in my college history class I had to read words like ‘cool’ and ‘fun when my professor put up an anonymous poll asking how we would feel if we were on the Middle Passage. It is why teachers are taking their students to cotton fields and making it a game of ‘how much cotton can you pick’ when teaching about slavery. It is why, “A Connecticut fourth grade Social Studies textbook falsely claimed that slaves were treated just like “family”. A Texas geography textbook referred to enslaved Africans as “workers”. In

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I am incredibly thankful that my professors brought ‘controversial’ and ‘uncomfortable’ topics within the classroom. Listening to my peers and teacher talk about what they experienced because of their identity helped me understand what I can do as a person and future teacher to better support my minoritized friends and students. My history professor providing photos and descriptions of distressed citizens from a distressed time helped me better understand the severity of the issue.

These topics are only controversial and uncomfortable if you make them controversial and uncomfortable. To the rest of society, these are necessary conversations that people have weekly, if not daily. Conversations and meetings surrounding climate change, race, sexuality, gender identity, etc. happen every second. Why is it only a problem when it is within secondary education?

Please consider my testimony and vote NO on this appalling bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I will now take any questions you may have.