

Renee Finan, School Psychology Student
University of Dayton, Department of Counselor Education & Human Services

Jerry Cirino, Andrew Brenner, Terry Johnson, Rob McColley, Sandra O'Brien, Michele Reynolds, Kristina Roegner, Michael Rulli, and members of the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony today. My name is Renee Finan. I am a current second-year school psychology graduate student at the University of Dayton. I am writing to express my concerns with Senate Bill 83 in its entirety, but I would like to specifically emphasize the section that is posing to ban Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training as well as opportunities for faculty and students to engage in conversations surrounding diversity, race, gender, sexuality, faith, and more.

I am the current Secretary of a graduate student organization called the School Psychologists of the University of Dayton. Within that organization, we have a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion team that led by a classmate of mine. SB 83 would directly impact my educational training experience as a school psychology graduate student as well as the experiences of my classmates and faculty members. If this bill is passed, my student organization would lose a core aspect of its purpose, which is to educate ourselves and others about the experiences of diverse individuals that we encounter day to day. Students pursuing higher education in school psychology would not be equipped with the necessary skill sets and resources to be effectively prepared to help the diverse needs and backgrounds of the children and families in our Ohio schools.

Beyond the school psychology program, SB 83 would affect many communities with whom I work. For those who do not fit the "typical" mold, this bill will effectively silence their experiences, struggles, and rights to make their voices heard. Individuals of color, LGBTQ+ communities, parents, students, and educators across the state would be directly impacted due to the infringement that this bill poses on students at universities that wish to educate themselves on the experiences of diverse populations that may be different from their own. Students obtain an education to learn, not just about their specific major or course of study, but how to be a well-rounded individual who can interact with society and join organizations that allow them to explore real-world topics surrounding race, gender, sexuality, faith, and diversity. This bill will destroy the intentions of those who dream of creating school environments that support all students' success and well-being.

In summary, I am testifying against the passing of Senate Bill 83 due to the undeniable truth that Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training is crucial to paving more inclusive, safe, and connected Ohio schools. Should you allow this bill to pass, it will negatively affect millions of people and communities across the state. I ask that you please consider my testimony and vote no on SB 83. Thank you for your time.