

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

Thank you for allowing me to send in my testimony and giving me an opportunity to voice my opinion. My name is Paige Oatney. I'm currently in my second year at OSU and I've loved every minute of it. I'm studying psychology and leadership management to make people work together as cohesively and productively as possible. All of the courses that I've taken so far have given me new perspectives on what I have to think about when assessing companies and organizations, especially systemic issues based on biases, prejudices, and stereotypes. This is one of the many reasons why I am strongly opposed to Senate Bill 83 and its companion bill in the Ohio House.

When I first learned about this bill, I truly thought that it was a joke. Why would people propose these ideologies that try to erase the history of others? Why would we stop people with a fully developed prefrontal cortex, capable of making their own decisions, from choosing what they can and can't learn about? Why, why, why?

When you look at the summary of the bill, taking out legislative jargon for those that have had educational access taken away from them and are unable to break down what each part means, the whole picture looks like this: Bans mandatory DEI programs and training, bans affinity groups and affirmative action policies, bans public positions on controversial issues, bans relationships with China, bans striking and forms of collective bargaining- bans, bans, bans, and more bans. What does it feel like to see your legislation when it's not spruced up in legal terms that only makes it harder for the general public to understand? How does it feel knowing that you're restricting people from learning about the diversity of our society when 43% of Columbus is non-white?

Banning public positions of controversial issues is a direct violation of our constitution; our first amendment right states exactly that Congress will make no law restricting "the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." Yet, in 2022, congress had no issue repealing its law requiring people 21 years of age and older who wish to carry a concealed handgun in public to obtain a permit and background check, giving them even easier access to their right to bear arms. There is no way, in my mind, to understand why legislation was passed to make it easier to access a weapon that caused 45,222 people to die in 2020 alone and ripped families apart from loss- there is nothing in my mind that helps me to understand why more restrictions are being put on education rather than something that is a true threat to society.

I please ask you to consider what your true motives are with this bill and the drastic effect that it will have on our society as a whole. Please, vote NO on this harmful bill and consider why it's so crucial at our point in time right now to support education on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to write my testimony and consider it before a decision is made.

Sincerely, "with thoughts and prayers,"

Paige Oatney

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