

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 MK Lamkin and I am a 49-year old educator whose focus is on recruiting and supporting student researchers. As someone who believes that context matters, I am strongly opposed to Senate Bill 83 and its companion bill in the Ohio House. Like many white folks in my age group, I was poorly educated on the collective policies, practices, and behaviors that result in people experiencing society differently depending on their race, gender, and sexual orientation. I had a central idea that I think this bill helps perpetuate: *if you work hard and play by the rules, you can achieve anything*.

When I experienced sexual assault and rape (whether at age 8 or 28), I felt isolated and blamed myself. I was unaware that sexual violence was so devastatingly common or that there were scholars and activists advocating for gender-based power sharing in all sorts of relationships across domestic and professional spaces. No one talked about it. It was divisive, I guess. It could make men feel guilty, I guess.

I see these bills as policies to ensure that education about sexism, racism, and homophobia, and transphobia is nonexistent, like it was in the 80s when I was growing up. I was in my 40s before I really started to unpack my own race-based and gender-based experiences. As I was learning, I felt validated for some of my experiences and guilty for others. So what did I do? I processed my feelings and learned to do better. I would expect anyone else could do the same: *process their feelings and learn to do better*.

By making race, gender, and sexual orientation taboo topics, people who experience identity-based violence will be unnecessarily isolated, as I was through my experiences of sexual assault and rape. Through these bills, you silence majority identity folks who might be inclined to stand up for others, or worse, allow them to develop dangerous ideas about people who are different from them.

If that is your intention, then please just say that. Otherwise, I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this dangerous bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to take any questions you may have.

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