

Testimony

Provided to the Ohio Senate, Workforce and Higher Education Committee
Senator Jerry Cirino, Chair
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OPPOSING SB83

PROVIDED BY
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Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony against Senate Bill 83. I am a citizen of Oxford, Ohio and a professor at Miami University, where I have taught for 13 years. I do not represent Miami University, but rather I am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to SB83. I write to you with deep concern about the revised version of SB83. Despite several changes and clarifications to the original bill, the legislation is, at its core, deeply flawed and represents vast government overreach that undermines academic freedom and institutional autonomy. This bill is an appalling attempt to limit freedom of thought, without any evidence that the kind of activities, such as “faculty inculcation of students,” that the bill purports to protect against are actually occurring. It is one of the worst assaults on academic freedom and intellectual creativity that this nation has ever seen.

In addition to limiting the American rights to freedom of thought and free speech, SB83 will completely destroying the higher education system in Ohio. Our best faculty members who do not wish to teach under such a regime of surveillance and micromanagement will find jobs at other universities in other states. The bill bogs down the entire process of higher education in paperwork and oversight. Further, various unfunded mandates in the SB83 will require resources, but add not value to higher education. But the SB83’s impact will go far beyond higher education. It will hurt the workforce of Ohio, who used to depend on a quality education but can no longer find that in our state. Businesses will certainly also look elsewhere to invest in states where the legislature believes in American values.

Partisan-motivated control over higher education is dangerous in a free society. SB83 is an extremely partisan way to put together curriculum standards for higher education.

SB83 is a great disappointment, and I will never vote for a representative of who supported this bill. Anyone who does ought to be ashamed of themselves. I encourage all members of the Ohio Republican party to put their political allegiances aside and do what is right for the educators and students of Ohio.