

Testimony of Noeleen McIlvenna

Before the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee

Senator Jerry Cirino,, Chair

May 16, 2023

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Rulli, Ranking Member Ingram, and Members of the Workforce and Higher Education Committee,

I would like to register my opposition to Substitute Senate Bill 83. This Bill would inflict grievous harm to our centers of higher learning, to our citizens, and to the reputation of our state. I have spent my life's work on the research and teaching of American History. Thomas Jefferson would turn over in his grave if he saw this Bill and the attempt by politicians to interfere in what happens in our university classrooms.

Education was extremely important to the Founding Fathers. In the Land Ordinances of the 1780s, written even before the Constitution, the Congress set up Ohio and set aside lands for a public school in every district. Jefferson himself founded the University of Virginia, one of the premier public universities in the nation. What mattered was producing a populace that could think critically on all the issues facing them, and could not be easily swayed by politicians, so that our democracy would be strong. Interference in the curriculum and the administration of our colleges is the opposite of that.

Republicans have nothing to fear from universities. A majority of the college-educated have always voted Republican. Please scrap this Bill. Let experts teach their content materials free of chilling language that makes them frightened to explain the facts of our world, present and past. Ohio will be the stronger for it.