



Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee  
Proponent Testimony on SB 117  
Rebecca E. Zietlow  
May 16, 2023

Chairman Cirino, Vice-Chair Michael Rulli, Ranking Member Kent Smith, and members of the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this brief, written testimony in support of the Institute for American Constitutional Thought & Leadership. My name is Rebecca Zietlow, and I am the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Assistant Dean for Diversity and Inclusion, Distinguished University Professor, and the Charles W. Fornoff Professor of Law and Values, at the University of Toledo College of Law.

I firmly believe that the Institute’s mission—“[t]o create and disseminate knowledge about American constitutional thought, and form future leaders of the legal profession through scholarship, teaching, collaboration, and mentorship”—will enhance our students’ education, enrich the academic community at the University of Toledo, and form the future leaders of Ohio through civil dialogue and discussion. The Institute will continue the University of Toledo College of Law’s longstanding tradition of valuing diverse viewpoints and open discussion of important legal issues among our faculty and students.

The Institute will enrich students’ education in numerous ways. It will provide additional classes, it will attract and retain excellent faculty, and it will provide avenues for student research and writing. The Institute will enrich the University’s academic community by partnering with existing and new faculty to teach, research, write, and mentor students on “fundamental questions concerning justice, the rule of law, and the Constitution.” The Institute will model for students, through its intentional creation of civil debate and discussion, how Americans of all viewpoints should engage with each other as fellow citizens together participating in the common enterprise of self-government. It will be a valuable asset for the University of Toledo College of Law, the University community as a whole and the Toledo community at large.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Yours truly,

Rebecca E. Zietlow  
Associate Dean of Academic Affairs  
Assistant Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion  
Distinguished University Professor  
Charles W. Fornoff Professor of Law and Values  
University of Toledo College of Law