

Dear Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing in opposition to Sub. Senate Bill 83 and its companion bill in the Ohio House, House Bill 151.

As an Ohio State University alumnus with both a bachelor and master's degree in education, a 35-year career teacher and former Ohio Teacher of the Year, it is incredibly chilling to see the far-reaching destructive implications inherent in this legislation.

Restricting academic freedom in higher institutions of learning state-wide will be a fatal blow to the integrity of Ohio's public universities and their ability to attract top-notch professors, medical and science researchers and students.

Silencing professors and dictating curriculum poisons the profession of education and pollutes the deep inquiry and debate essential to the educational discourse between teachers and students.

If passed into law, HB 151 and SB 83 will be the "brain drain" for Ohio's public universities. Instead of a destination state for stellar students seeking intellectual rigor and a sure-fire career path, Ohio's public universities will quickly fall off the map with a reputation for patronizing, regulatory and restrictive policies which inhibit true exploration of relevant curriculum.

This legislation is a big "Stop Sign" for the best and brightest professors and researchers to stay out of Ohio and turn to other states' universities for employment and career opportunities. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) is staunchly opposed to HB 151 and SB 83 calling it "the worst assault on academic freedom we have ever seen."

It's also a huge red flag for the future strength of economic development in Ohio. Corporations that are scouting out potential states for development and investment opportunities will cross Ohio off their list because Ohio's legislators have voted to dilute the academic profession, control curriculum and silence the voices of university professors.

Ohio's institutions of higher learning will not be a climate where students learn to think for themselves, problem-solve, collaborate, communicate and debate which are vital skills for potential employers in the 21st century. Corporations, and companies that specialize in cutting edge science, research and technology will close their doors on Ohio.

Academic freedom is the underpinning of a free thinking, democratic society.
Please protect academic freedom in Ohio.

I urge you to vote NO on Senate Bill 83

Sincerely,
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