

Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee

Opponent Testimony on S. B. No. 117

Emma S. Callihan, J.D.

June 5, 2023

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

Thank you for considering the following testimony in fervent opposition to Senate Bill 117. I am Emma Callihan, a recent graduate of the University of Toledo College of Law, a former President of the Women's Law Student Association ("WLSA"), and the first woman at the College of Law to receive the prestigious Chief Justice Thomas J. Moyer Fellowship.

My time at the University of Toledo College of Law showed me that while the College is painfully lacking in racial and ethnic diversity, the College does not lack intellectual diversity. Not only does the College currently have four (4) Constitutional law professors, but each professor proposes a distinct approach to educating law students about the foundational principles and ideals of this country's Constitution and its founding. Speaking to law students who had various professors for this two-part course in law school, it was clear that each professor contributed to, and fostered within, intellectual diversity at the College. While the College is rich in Constitutional thought scholars with diverse backgrounds and approaches, the College lacks in nearly every other area.

As mentioned by numerous opponents, the University of Toledo College of Law is struggling in a way that S.B. 117 does not address whatsoever. The College has failed, despite my numerous other students' involvement in seasonal hiring interviews, to hire on enough professors to ensure that law students can easily fill their schedules with courses required for graduation taught by professors competent to teach said subjects. Instead, the College began offering Bar

tested courses taught by professors who lacked expertise and experience in said subject other than taking the Bar exam years ago. In addition to this, the College is continuing to lose highly qualified professors. At least five professors left the College in the past three years and took their expertise in contract law, disability law, employment discrimination law, environmental law, trusts and estates with them. The University of Toledo College of Law was already a smaller school when I arrived. S.B. 117 fails to address this dire need for general funding to support hiring professors for the College who can teach first year subjects and Bar tested subjects.

S.B. 117 also fails to address concerns expressed to numerous faculty members, law students, and legal community members regarding the culture for law students who are women, LGBTQIA+, Black, Latina/o, and/or Middle Eastern/North African at the University of Toledo College of Law. Study after study shows that the more diverse and inclusive organizations are racially and by gender, the more innovative and profitable they become. It is clear that the College is struggling financially. While S.B. 117 may seem promising, implementing this Bill will usurp funding that is desperately needed to improve the College's Bar exam passage rate and foster a safe, positive experience during law school to boost donations. S.B. 117 fails to provide a concrete, actionable plan for enriching the College in its current time of distress.

S.B. 117, and its proponents, fail to provide a rational reason for spending \$3 million in hard-earned Ohioan tax-payer dollars on something that is not necessary for the College. This money is desperately needed by the College to do the above including the hiring and retaining of professors to teach first year and Bar exam tested subjects. That \$3 million could do amazing things for the College, but creating an "institute of American constitutional thought and leadership" is not what the College needs right now. Passing S.B. 117 will ensure that the College continues to struggle for years to come.

I urge you to speak to students and 2023 alumni from the University of Toledo College of Law. You will see that forcing a struggling College to house an “academic unit” within it that allegedly requires administrative space, but will not report to the College, is asinine. The College is struggling, but not because it is lacking intellectual diversity or Constitutional law professors. You have the power to do something about this struggle. Please do not pass S.B. 117.

Thank you for your consideration. Thank you for voting NO on S.B. 117.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emma S. Callihan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

Emma S. Callihan, J.D.

University of Toledo College of Law