

Testimony of Danielle Fosler-Lussier
Before the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee
Senator Jerry Cirino, Chair
submitted by email June 4, 2023 for the hearing scheduled for June 5, 2023

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

My name is Danielle Fosler-Lussier, and I am a professor of Music at The Ohio State University where I have taught for more than 20 years. I do not represent The Ohio State University, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen **in opposition to Senate Bill 117**.

The proposed “Chase Center” duplicates existing entities at Ohio State. We have numerous units that teach about a variety of aspects of “historical ideas, traditions, and texts that have shaped the American constitutional order and society.” We have a History department and a Political Science department. We have the Mershon Center for International Security Studies, a Center for Ethics and Human Values, and a variety of other units that engage with American history and related texts. The Department of History is already developing a program in leadership (lines 57-58). The proposed center does not assist the university in carrying out its mission; by duplicating existing efforts, it is a waste of resources.

The bill outlines a structure for the center that is in contradiction to our Faculty Rules and principles of governance. Centers do not hire faculty (line 39): faculty are hired by Tenure-Initiating Units (typically departments or schools). Centers do not have “bylaws” (line 16): they operate in accordance with Ohio State’s Faculty Rules. By placing the governance of the proposed center outside the hands of the faculty (lines 72-74) this bill disregards the fact that the faculty manage the curriculum at Ohio State. This proposal is poorly thought through, poorly designed, and impossible to execute within our existing rules.

“Free, open, and rigorous intellectual inquiry” (lines 18-19) already exists throughout our university. Students are already being equipped to “reach their own informed conclusions” (lines 21-23), including in our newly redesigned General Education curriculum. This bill, like others introduced recently, seeks to “solve” a problem that does not exist.

I refer you to the prior testimony of Professor Richard Fletcher and Christopher Nichols: their arguments are sound and well-informed.

I ask that you oppose Senate Bill 117.

Sincerely yours,

Danielle Fosler-Lussier