

Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee
Opponent Testimony on SB 117
Cecilia Cantineri

June 5, 2023

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

I am appreciative of the opportunity to provide written testimony in opposition to SB 117 which seeks to create the Institute for American Constitutional Thought at University of Toledo College of Law. My name is Cecilia Cantineri, and I am a second year student and student leader at The University of Toledo College of Law. I am writing this out of serious concern for the negative impact this legislation could have on my law school.

Throughout my first year of law school, I was given opportunities to hear diverse viewpoints on various topics debated throughout the legal profession. Specifically, many of the debates and speakers addressing controversial topics were put on by the Federalist Society. In my first year, I genuinely did not feel a bias toward any political party, as there is something for everyone on campus regardless of political affiliation.

The College of Law has a very strong sense of community among students which fosters and embraces diversity. There are many bright law students who are in the making to become excellent attorneys and be an asset to the citizens of Ohio. Addressing existing problems within the College of Law is imperative. The College of Law would benefit from increased funding for scholarships, increased class selection in several areas of law, more options for parking, and increased support for professional and career development.

Creating a new entity within the college of law would create further strain on our already stretched thin resources, and shift focus from current pressing issues. Addressing current issues would greatly increase the quality of education law students experience, and would ultimately better prepare future attorneys for practice. Many students are facing obstacles and challenges including not being able to find parking to make it to class on time, not being able to register in classes in their specific area of interest due to a lack of course offerings, and financial strain due to a lack of scholarship funding.

The University of Toledo College of Law holds a tight-knit community of politically diverse individuals, and I would be interested to watch the law school flourish with additional funding to address the pressing issues discussed above rather than creating an institute that would ultimately shift focus from concerns repeatedly voiced by students. The College of Law once held a

fantastic reputation regionally, and has an absolutely fantastic faculty and student body. Enhancing and restoring the College of Law to its full potential would be a much more effective use of funds than creating a new institute within an already struggling school.

I respectfully request that you reconsider your support for SB 117, and shift focus to prioritizing the needs of The University of Toledo College of Law as it stands currently. Prioritizing addressing these issues will improve the quality of education provided to present and future students alike.

Thank you for your time dedicated to this manner. I recognize and appreciate the hard work you do serving the citizens of Ohio, and specifically students at The University of Toledo. Please do not hesitate to reach out for any further questions regarding this matter.

Best,

Cecilia L. Cantineri