

44th House District

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State Representative Joshua E. Williams
Ohio House of Representatives

Chairwoman Fowler Arthur, Vice-Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the House Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 155 today. I would also like to thank my joint sponsor, Representative Lear, for her work on this legislation.

As Rep. Lear discussed in her testimony, this bill seeks to amend Sections 3314.03, 3326.11, 3328.24, and to enact Section 3313.475 of the Revised Code to prohibit DEI programs in our public schools. This would include the use of DEI in orientation and training programs, office or departments, job descriptions, and the contracting of consultants or outside groups.

Through legislation like this, we hope to cultivate an educational environment that promotes unity and harmony among students, focusing on our commonalities rather than differences. By treating all of our students and staff the same, we can allow our educators to focus on core academic subjects and ensure high-quality outcomes for every student in Ohio.

It is time for Ohio to align with the current federal push to remove DEI initiatives from any type of public hiring process. As we saw with 2023's *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*, race-based affirmative action programs for college admissions have been

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deemed unconstitutional, as they violate the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Similarly, race-based hiring practices would violate Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as it prohibits employment discrimination based on protected characteristics such as race and sex. DEI initiatives for hiring in schools would violate this as they affect decision making in the hiring process and could unfairly disadvantage applicants against others. It is time for Ohio to follow our federal government's lead to ensure that our hiring practices are based solely on the merit of the applicant, and not the color of their skin or other characteristics.

Overall, I believe HB 155 represents a carefully designed approach to achieve our goal of an outstanding educational environment in Ohio. By prioritizing academic excellence and the equal treatment of all, we can foster a school system committed to producing high quality employees and productive, informed citizens. Chairwoman Fowler Arthur, Vice-Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the House Education Committee, thank you again for the chance to speak in favor of HB 155. I welcome any questions you may have.