

Testimony of Johnathan Chisam
Before the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee
Rep. Tom Young, Chair
March 11, 2025

Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and Members of the Higher Education Committee:

My name is Johnathan Chisam, and I am a doctoral student of chemistry at The Ohio State University. I do not represent The Ohio State University and am expressing my opposition to this bill as a private citizen. Ohio is fortunate enough to be host to a university classified as being within the Big Ten Universities which are of great influence within the academic world and resultingly bring a large sum of research funding to the state of Ohio a year. If this Bill is passed, I assure you, that The Ohio State University's status within the Big Ten is forfeit as there will be an exodus of some of the greatest minds from this state. Beyond that, there are many industries here that benefit from the presence of these academics and will likely leave alongside these researchers which will lose many Ohioans their jobs as well as the state it's revenues.

Beyond this, the content of this bill serves no purpose but to remove the accessibility of higher education to minoritized peoples by removing the ability to fund scholarships that apply to those groups. There appears to be a misconception held by the authors of this bill that equity reduces the rights and privileges of the upper class. Beyond the implications this has for students of color and disabled peoples, this bill will harm many Ohioan students as included within DEI efforts are people of lower socioeconomic status. Given that the state of Ohio ranks 12th in the USA for the highest poverty rates, the restriction of scholarships aimed at DEI will prevent the disbursement of those funds to the students of Ohio who need it most.

Finally, by restricting the discussion of "controversial topics" this bill will cause the cessation of academic debates on some of the most vital topics to this nation. This restriction on academic freedom stifles educators' ability to foster the intellectual growth of students. This in addition to the aforementioned results are only a brief summary of a much larger discussion that cause me to urge you to vote no on this bill.

Thank you,

Johnathan Chisam