

Maria Vitória de Rezende Grisi
Testimony on SB 1
Workforce and Higher Education Committee
March 7, 2025

Chairman Tom Young, and members of the Workforce and Higher Education Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Maria Vitória, and I am a fourth-year Ph.D. student in the Studies of the Portuguese-Speaking World program at OSU, where I also serve as a Graduate Teaching Associate. I speak here for myself on why I oppose this bill.

It's almost unbelievable that I have to stand here almost two years after SB83. While you were only able to gather 12 proponent testimonies, we are here in power and number. I must say I have significant concerns about this bill's implications.

First, regarding governance at Ohio State University: The bill seeks to restrict procedures that should remain under the Board of Trustees' purview, specifically the determination of student voting membership. Students constitute 67.48% of OSU's community (66,901 students in a total population of 99,142). Given this substantial representation, maintaining the possibility of student voting membership is crucial for effective university governance.

Second, regarding the syllabus requirements (pages 17-20): The bill mandates significant changes to syllabus accessibility and content without addressing:

- Implementation costs, which remain unspecified by the bill's sponsor
- The logistics of requiring syllabi to be accessible "by the use of not more than three links" from the institution's main page

- Who will be responsible for uploading, maintaining, and verifying this content

Furthermore, mandating public credential disclosure alongside syllabi creates unnecessary vulnerability. While my credentials are already publicly available through my department's webpage, a course syllabus should serve as an academic roadmap, not a justification of teaching qualifications. Two years after SB 83, there's one thing I've gained, and it's confidence to stand here. I'm proud of my journey, and of everything I've achieved through years of studying and working. But I still haven't managed to find in myself the kind of confidence and audacity some senators seem to have in spades. You know, if the pharmaceutical industry could bottle up their self-assurance and sell it as a pill, I'd be the first in line to buy it.

Senate Bill 1, as introduced by Senator Jerry C. Cirino, reads, "The institution declares that it will educate students by means of free, open, and rigorous intellectual inquiry to seek the truth." Now, I'd like to ask the sponsors of this bill to do us all a favor and enlighten us: what exactly is "the truth"? Please, define it. Explain it. But here's the catch—be careful. You don't want to force your views on your audience. No, you need to present the meaning of "truth" in a way that's unbiased, non-ideological, and actually worth listening to. Please, clarify the meaning of this concept that you seem to take so lightly despite it being debated by philosophers for centuries. And while you're at it, why not share with the rest of us when was the last time you stepped into one of those classrooms you're so quick to accuse of indoctrination? Better yet, don't just tell us—show us. Present the data. Prove to us the urgency, the importance, and the necessity of this bill. Because without evidence, this isn't a bill—it's an assumption.

No, I don't think a class about the Holocaust should promote a debate on whether it was good or bad or if it happened or not. I believe in a classroom where historical FACTS should be presented and the students should reflect on them to think of a better future. If the class demands

that we learn different methods of analysing facts, then we will present all methods. Methods are not the same as facts. The classroom is not a place for ideology. If you want to believe a disturbed vision of the Holocaust, you do it at your house, with your friends. Universities will not lose their standards of excellence because some people feel like their vision are better than facts.

I'd like to end with this question: What happened to small government and free markets? I still want to believe this country is a democracy and a republic—a place where representatives of the people actually listen to the voices of the people. Let's not forget, politicians aren't special. They're citizens, just like the rest of us. Maybe it's time they remembered that, especially when they sit down to write bills that affect so many of us. I will now take any questions. Thank you.