

## **Testimony of Molly L. Hornberger**

Before the House Higher Education Committee

Representative Tom Young, Chair

March 11, 2025

Chair Young, Vice-Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today.

My name is Molly Hornberger. I am a lifelong Ohio Resident, and my family has both lived and gone to school in this state for over half a century. We have deep ties to this community.

I am here today on behalf of my family and myself who have had a comprehensive and challenging education in the state of Ohio. I am also here on behalf of every student in the state of Ohio who has grown up here, loved this state, and chosen to continue their education here because of this state's well known academic rigor and challenging university coursework. I am a third year student at Ohio state university studying public policy, sociology, African American, and African studies. I am also a morrill scholar, which is a DEI based scholarship program. So please, feel free to direct your questions about indoctrination at me, I am happy to answer.

I first want to say that my fields of study: Black studies, sociology, public policy: are a chosen field of study, just like engineering or mathematics; and just because you may not see value in it, it does not take away its importance or the inherent value of the field.

Let's be clear here - this bill would deeply inhibit the quality of education that we receive at higher education institutions. You Know it would, I know it would. By forcing us to avoid "controversial" topics, we are not being challenged to think critically about the world. This is absolutely a form of censorship. This bill does not promote free speech like it claims, because if it did, it would encourage us to have uncomfortable conversations and face uncomfortable realities about the world. As for me, I do not know how I could continue my various fields of study under this piece of legislation.

Ohio State is one of the leading institutions in the country. But Make no mistake - this bill WILL prevent students from coming here. And it will force students to leave - including me. I will not continue my education in a place where I am told that I cannot learn about hard things because they might be too controversial.

I want to note that i myself am a daughter of genocide, and that I have chosen a career that centers genocide prevention and human rights work. An institution that would potentially promote the learning of "both" sides of a genocide is not an insitution that I will ever be apart of. And because this bill does not specifically define what a controversial topic is, it has created a slippery slope for environments where gencoide can potentially be defended and diasporas of genocide survivors traumatized all over again. Like Churchill said, Those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it.

I do not want to leave this home that I have loved so much, but I will be forced to, so will my family, and so will other students.

Please, consider my testimony as just a snapshot of the detrimental effects that this bill would have. I implore you to vote no on this bill for all students and lifelong Ohio residents.

Thank you for your time and I am happy to take any questions you may have.