

Testimony of Elizabeth Weiss, Ph.D.
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 Dr. Elizabeth Weiss and I am a senior lecturer in psychology at The Ohio State University Newark where I have taught for 22 years. I do not represent The Ohio State University Newark, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen.

This bill does not give our students nearly enough credit. I have had the honor of teaching more than 6,000 learners in the course of my career to date. They are smart, curious, and eager to make our communities better for everyone. Unlike many people in the political sphere, they are not afraid of unfamiliar or new ideas. They are adaptable and motivated and hungry for knowledge.

This bill is rife with contradictions and has the potential to eliminate the “free, open, and rigorous intellectual inquiry” that it allegedly wishes to defend. I have taught courses on gender, sexuality, stereotyping, and prejudice for over two decades. It has always been my policy to provide students with scientific information and space to consider ideas that may challenge their existing world views. The conclusions they reach are up to them – there is no “indoctrination” here. This bill is a thinly veiled effort to quash any discussion of “controversial” issues so that students reach conclusions that are favorable to conservative lawmakers.

As a case in point, “radical gender ideology” is neither radical nor an ideology. Science says that while there are two chromosomal configurations that are most common, there are more than 15 ways to have a genetic status that is something other than XX or XY. This is not controversial or radical. It’s fact. When students are presented with this information, they react with an attitude of curiosity and are eager to learn more.

Actual American history clearly shows that White people enslaved Black people, and that that enslavement was the economic backbone of our young country. When students learn about this, and about how that economic blueprint still shows up in our society, we speak at length about how no one alive now is responsible for those acts. However, we all, regardless of race or ethnicity, need to work together to create a more just society for everyone. Students are eager to get to work on making the world a better place. None of this is indoctrination. These evolving views and deeper understandings are the *point* of education.

If this bill passes, I have no doubt that our best and brightest students will leave Ohio for states where their education has not been so egregiously compromised. Faculty that work in areas deemed “controversial” will no doubt follow. The learning and work will not stop, but it

will happen in other states and countries, leaving Ohio to fall behind in terms of workforce readiness.

If you cannot be convinced of the potential damage this bill will cause to education, perhaps the impact on the state's bottom line will be more persuasive. This bill will dramatically decrease Ohio's appeal for students, teachers, and businesses. Families with children that want to go to college will leave and establish residency in other states where their students can get a complete education. In the absence of an educated workforce, companies will locate elsewhere.

I urge you to make the right decision for our students, our communities, and our state and vote no on this bill.