

Testimony of August Gonzalez

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 August Gonzalez, and I am a third-year M.D. candidate at The Ohio State University College of Medicine. I do not represent The Ohio State University but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen. The proposed bill represents a dangerous attack on the freedoms of citizens, academics, and The Ohio State University itself. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion has been a proud part of OSU since 1970. In fact, OSU takes pride in the steps it has made to promote the value of intellectual and experiential diversity and has done so for decades. The current proposition aims to put an end to that. DEI is not new, it is not “woke,” it is a cherished and historical part of this country. The ideals of opportunity and the pursuit of happiness for all is an integral doctrine of our country. I have studied at The Ohio State University for 4 years as an undergraduate, and 3 years as a medical student. In a year’s time, I would have been proud to continue that legacy at this institution. However, it is bills such as this one that are actively keeping me from continuing to build my future here.

I came to OSU through the Morrill Scholarship Program, which is a part of DEI. The Morrill Scholarship website describes the program as follows: “The Morrill Scholarship Program (MSP) is Ohio State’s premier merit scholarship program rewarding academically talented students who are actively engaged in diversity-based leadership, service, and social justice activities. The MSP mission is to support the recruitment, retention, and success of students through scholarships and education enrichment programs that inspire advocates and champions of diversity, inclusion, social justice, and academic excellence on campus and in the broader community.” I would like you to focus on one word in this: merit. The Morrill Scholarship program was originally established in 1982. It is a historic and meaningful part of this university and has always represented the possibility for those who can show a commitment both academically, and to the values that this university have held for decades. If you oppose DEI, you are opposing not only the voters who brought you to where you are, but the values that this institution has held for decades. If you truly believe you are meant to advocate for your constituents, you must oppose this bill. If you claim to believe in the value of tradition and history, you must oppose this bill.