

Chairman Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio and members of the Committee. Thank you for having me here today to testify on this important bill which restores merit and excellence to higher education.

My name is Kurt Miceli. I am medical director of Do No Harm Action. For more than a decade I have also taught at the college level as an adjunct professor. I come before you on behalf of Do No Harm Action, not my university affiliations.

The Founders of our great country understood very clearly the importance education has in maintaining our civilization and our freedoms. Like Socrates, they knew “education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel.” For them, a free, open, and rigorous intellectual inquiry brought them to Truth.

How hard it is today to find that Truth when we fill the vessel with an ideology antithetical to it. Critical Social Justice is that ideology. It is the driving force behind modern DEI efforts in higher education that has been inculcated into the hearts and minds of students at the expense of free thought.

It portrays knowledge as a social construct. It fixates on racial and gender identities, ignoring the individual. It views the world through the lens of oppressor and oppressed, putting people into camps based on their demographics. It punishes diversity of thought and treats some people more favorably than others in the name of equity. Far from being inclusive, it excludes any unwelcoming belief.

Without a doubt DEI is destroying our once venerable institutions. Just look to the neighboring state of Michigan where the University system – according to an October 2024 *New York Times* article – has spent a quarter of a billion dollars on DEI initiatives over a decade with one key result: a climate of fear.

Look at Pennsylvania where my medical school alma mater – in the first days of orientation – hosts classes on antiracism in healthcare. What ever happened to starting with the Hippocratic Oath?

Simply, classical liberal education in America is under assault by DEI. When we see DEI policies enacted, we see intellectual diversity stifled. We see activist flags dominate the landscape with the stars and stripes hidden away. We see merit, equality of opportunity, and colorblindness pushed to the side.

The upshot: Both a lower quality of education and quality of life at our most prestigious institutions.

In medicine, the result extends past academia and into the world of clinical practice. When medical students, for example, are chosen by their immutable characteristics to meet some predefined outcome, we compromise the future quality of care patients will receive.

We know from the Association of American Medical Colleges that scores on the MCAT, the achievement test for medical school, predict medical student performance. We also know that performance in medical school is correlated to performance as a practicing physician. And we know certification exam scores on the internal medicine boards, for example, are associated with improved outcomes among hospitalized Medicare beneficiaries.

Merit does matter. And for patients it's simple – it's about excellence and safety, not DEI.

Likewise, when instructors are hired, promoted, or given research dollars based on their commitment to DEI ideology, we get ideological purification – as well as significant financial bloat with DEI departments, officers, plans, etc.

DEI is regressive. It brings us back to a primal state which promotes more than just mediocrity, but also discrimination, racism, and antisemitism, as we've unfortunately seen most recently on college campuses. It subverts the foundation of American values and a classically liberal education.

For these and other reasons, Do No Harm Action strongly supports legislation that will eliminate DEI from education. Simply, we need to restore our focus on education instead of indoctrination. We need to cultivate those American values which have made our country and our system of higher education the envy of the world. Following the wisdom of the Ancient Greeks, we need to let the flame of education burn brightly.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to further elaborate and discuss.