

Testimony of Jacqueline Daugherty, Ph.D.
Before the House Higher Education Committee
Rep. Tom Young, Chair
May 17, 2023

Chair Young, Ranking Member Miller, and Members of the Higher Education Committee:

My name is Dr. Jacqueline Daugherty, and I am a professor of Sociology and Individualized Studies at Miami University, where I have taught for 12 years. I do not represent Miami University, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to House Bill 151.

It may be easier to understand why we need to continue DEI initiatives on campus and free inquiry in the classroom, if we consider a simple and depoliticized perspective. I will share a story from a Brazilian friend about her college experience.

While she attended a top university in Brazil, the recreation fields were filled with mostly male students playing soccer all day long. This is how the fields had always been used. She had never used the fields because she didn't play soccer and there weren't any co-ed teams that could teach her. One year while she was a student, the recreation center designated that soccer could no longer be played on a few of those fields and instead any other sport was the priority.

At first, the recreational soccer players were upset because it meant less space for them and more coordination to share the remaining soccer fields. At first, many students demonstrated and wrote newspaper articles against the new rule because they felt the change was forced.

Then a few months later when my friend walked by those newly designated fields, she noticed small groups of students--many of whom were now women--playing other sports, like badminton, frisbee, and volleyball. She took the opportunity to join the newly forming badminton club, and met a whole new group of friends as they learned together how to play a new sport. Fifteen years later, these new sports are no longer new and the opportunities for recreational play are far more varied and inclusive than they were before the rule changed.

This simple case study demonstrates why universities need to support DEI programming and multi-perspective academic inquiry--inside the classroom and out. It is important for institutions of higher education to support student opportunities to better understand new perspectives they haven't been exposed to, from new people they may otherwise not have the opportunity to meet. **We don't know what new ideas and relationships will flourish, unless we create a supportive space for their genesis.**

Thank you,

Jacqueline Daugherty

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Jacqueline Daugherty, PhD (she/her)