

Representatives Demetriou and Williams,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Michael Mills. I am a Professor of Materials Science and Engineering at the Ohio State University, and Chair of the Department. I have been a Professor at OSU for 29 years, my two children both received Bachelor's degrees in engineering from OSU, and I have been a proud Buckeye—until now. However, I have never been as truly appalled and worried for the future of Higher Education in Ohio than I am today because of HB 151 (and SB 83). I would like to make 6 points against passage of this legislation:

(1) When I started at OSU, there was 1 woman faculty member in the Materials Science and Engineering (MSE) department. Today, 15 of our faculty (38 total) are women or from under-represented minority backgrounds. I am proud to say that my department today is in the top 15 amongst all MSE departments in the country. Thus, we have maintained our excellence while providing our students with role models that represent the actual population of the state of Ohio. These positive changes are due to Diversity and Inclusion initiatives at the College and University levels, and HB 151 will eliminate these initiatives, and will inevitably reverse these immensely positive changes.

(2) I am extremely concerned that this legislation will cause our faculty members to seek positions in states where the professionalism of our faculty is not being questioned and micromanaged, as HB 151 does. Our best and most successful faculty are the very ones who have the ability to seek out positions in Universities with more favorable environments. World-class faculties such as ours literally takes decades to create. HB 151 could dissipate it within months. Ohio and the industries (e.g. in the aerospace, energy, and automotive sectors) that depend on us to train the students that they hire and for our research interactions will all suffer as a result.

(3) As a Department and College of Engineering, we currently already have a rigorous system of faculty evaluation, which current requires input from students as a formal part of the evaluation. This bill creates an additional and unnecessary intrusion on our existing processes, but potentially opens the door to evaluating tenure based on factors outside of our already rigorous metrics.

(4) Diversity and Inclusion initiatives are embraced by industry Ohio, and across the US. My industry colleagues advocate that diversity and Inclusion is GOOD for business. HB 151 will put Colleges in Ohio at odds with our industry colleagues and will not prepare our students to join this ever-diversifying workforce.

(5) Many federal programs which fund faculty research in engineering require that faculty creatively participate in outreach efforts to engage students (including K-12 students as well as college students) from diverse backgrounds, thereby opening their horizons to engineering as a career path. Our faculty firmly believe that this is good for the young people in the State of Ohio. HB 151 will not allow our faculty to pursue these initiatives and will eliminate our faculty from

many of the most prestigious federal research funding sources from the National Science Foundation, Department of Energy, Department of Defense, and National Institutes of Health. As a result, OSU and other state universities will lose many of our very best, most successful, and productive faculty to other states where restrictions on these student diversity outreach efforts are not being outlawed.

(6) China has been a source for many undergraduate and graduate students. The majority of these students, who learn and excel in parallel with our domestic students, remain in the US to become citizens and work in our industries, national labs, and academia. They are a source of incredible strength and ingenuity which has made our educational system the envy of the world. HB 151 will effectively kill the engine for innovation that these students provide. There is already a significant drop in student applications from China due to policies at the federal level. There is no need for Ohio to specifically and additionally target these students and programs.

I implore you to consider my testimony and vote NO on HB 151. It is unnecessary and will irreparably harm higher education in Ohio and the competitiveness of our students and our state in fields such as Engineering.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.