

Testimony in Opposition of SB 83
Delivered to the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee
Stephanie Lanzerotti — Non-Profit and Human Resources Professional
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Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Rulli, Ranking Minority Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in opposition of Senate Bill 83. My name is Stephanie Lanzerotti and I am a Non-Profit and HR Professional with over a decade of experience. I am writing in opposition of SB 83, the Enact Higher Education Enhancement Act. The signing of this bill into law would not only impact my professional role, it would impact the industries in which I work and the community in which I live.

As a non-profit professional who has recruited, trained, and retained volunteers working directly with diverse and traditionally underserved populations, I witnessed firsthand the need for social work professionals to have a robust understanding of the historical systematic barriers different populations face as well as their impact over time. A nuanced understanding of the unique experience of these populations and individuals is also key to providing and evaluating the best care. Removal of "specified concepts" such as diversity, social justice, systemic racism, gender identity, equity, or inclusion, from university and college curriculums statewide would limit these professionals' knowledge, skills, abilities. This reduction in professional acumen would reduce the outcomes provided to our Ohio communities. In short, SB 83 will have a tangible, negative effect on the services provided to, and the outcomes of, our local child protection systems, family services, and mental health initiatives.

As a human resources professional, there are countless research studies from well-respected academic and business institutions showing the value of creating a culture of inclusion within organizations and companies by acknowledging, understanding, and valuing diverse, intersectional identities of employees. These business outcomes not only include higher profit margins and stakeholder returns, but also include increased market share and innovation. Removing the ability to equip new HR professionals with these skills in a job market where a majority of Fortune 500 companies have diversity statements, commitments to inclusive cultures, training initiatives, and measurable DEI outcomes will put Ohio colleges and university programs, as well as their students, at a grave disadvantage.

I ask that you reconsider supporting Senate Bill 83 so that Ohio may maintain the quality of services provided to our communities, the skill level of our future professionals, and a key competitive advantage of our universities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Stephanie Lanzerotti