

Testimony of **Patricia Enciso, PhD**  
Before the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee  
Senator Jerry Cirino, Chair  
**April 17, 2023**

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Rulli, Ranking Member Ingram, and Members of the Workforce and Higher Education Committee:

My name is **Patricia Enciso** and I am a professor of **in the College of Education and Human Ecology at the Ohio State University** where I have taught for **27 years**. I do not represent **Ohio State University** but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 83.

Senate Bill 83 is an overreach by state officials to impose a state-manufactured version of truth on free people – a practice associated with demagogues and authoritarians not democratically elected legislators. By creating a list of approved topics and reporting mandates, the state would replace democratic dialogue and education with censorship, surveillance, and fear. I do not want to live and learn with young people when I might be accused of – or worse – my students might be shamed or harmed by simply stating a fact or asking an ‘incorrect’ question. Who decides what is within or outside the bounds of bias? Everyone is at risk of being someone else’s target. It’s madness.

Senate Bill 83 appears to be a mechanism to ‘reign in’ faculty, but the immediate and long-lasting effects of this bill will result in injury to students – who will become fearful, angry and silent as they enter classrooms where surveillance is valued over dialogue. Our students will no longer trust themselves, their peers, or the adults who have dedicated their lives to learning.

Students need more opportunities to understand one another’s lives, viewpoints, and truths. Senate Bill 83 would eliminate the democratic right – and necessity - to engage in academic inquiry without fear or intimidation. Senate Bill 83 mandates that faculty and students and administrators become one another’s speech police - a condition described in distant literature and histories about authoritarian regimes. Senate Bill 83 would bring authoritarianism into our Ohio classrooms and beloved campus life.

I prize my life in a democratic and free society. I deplore the ignorance and fear that would follow from the passage of this ugly vision of silenced and fearful young people, intimidated by anyone who disagrees with a question, a statement of fact, a story, a grandparent’s story, a history written by women, or Latinas, or Black scholars. Do you really believe that young people, of any race, class, or gender are so fragile and easily shamed that they cannot handle truth or the repair and redemption that follows from understanding all of the ways we become human and a nation? Should we teach our young people to be silent carriers of lies and fear? I do not want to be part of Senate Bill 83’s vision of America.

I urge you to defend democratic dialogue and inquiry. Do not pass this bill.