

Testimony of Samuel H. LiPuma, Associate Professor,
Philosophy, 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 Samuel H. LiPuma, and I am a professor of philosophy at Cuyahoga Community College, where I have taught for over 30 years. I do not represent Cuyahoga Community College, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 83.

This ill-advised bill is a solution in search of a problem. The consequence of this bill is not the enhancement of education, but rather the advancement of a culture war waged by those who want to control and clamp down on the educational process.

Higher education should be based on the principle of full, complete, and total academic freedom where the marketplace of ideas is nurtured and allowed to flourish. This bill will have the opposite, chilling-effect on the market place of ideas by imposing threats of funding and job loss should institutions and professors not expose their students to material in a way that satisfies politicians rather than leading scholars.

SB 83 attempts to intimidate professors through a "post tenure review" process whereby "controversial" topics not taught in a manner satisfactory to the legislature could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. The bill also attacks workers' rights by outlawing faculty strikes, which also represents another intimidation tactic.

SB 83 also attacks students through paternalistic overreach. By banning diversity, equity, and inclusion training it shows a lack of regard for individual freedom, and it promotes intolerance on college campuses.

SB 83 does not enhance higher education; rather it destroys the foundation of education. Instead of fostering the free exchange of ideas between professors and students, this bill politicizes and weaponizes education.

SB 83 has no place in a free society. I urge you to vote against this authoritarian measure.