



5/16/2023

Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center
215 E 14th Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202
Senate Bill 83: Ohio Higher Education Enhancement Act
Opponent Testimony - All Party Testimony
Written Testimony Only

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

Thank you for receiving the Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center's written testimony today. I am writing to express our opposition to Senate Bill 83, the Ohio Higher Education Enhancement Act. Founded in 1985, IJPC educates and advocates for peace in the pursuit of creating a nonviolent society.

This bill will directly impact our partnerships with local universities like University of Cincinnati, Miami University, and Xavier University, and the other relationships they have with similar community based organizations. Our recent programming, a Race and Racism in Cincinnati Docuseries that showcases a varied perspective to our city's history and culture, could be barred from universities. Programming that teaches local history not taught elsewhere and relationships to local nonprofits are integral to institutions of higher education. Instead, this bill aims to only share one version of history that is politically charged at this moment in time. All voices deserve to be heard so that we may grow our collective memories.

We believe that community collaboration and dialogue should be fostered rather than disbanded and restricted. As an organization steeped in the nuances of creating space to speak about differences, we know the more we continue to restrict space for dialogue, the more misunderstanding and fear we create. This bill, rather than enhance education, creates restrictions on student learning and engagement in topics that matter to them, topics that explore shared histories and reveal complex systems of power. The bill contradicts free speech by stating that only certain topics can be discussed rather than focusing on fostering the critical thinking that is required to create true change and improvement within our society.

Additionally, this bill restricts universities from standing up for just causes and speaking out on important issues. Over the years, universities have not only enhanced the diversity of our communities and brought new people into our state, but they created space to hear and learn about a variety of issues.

Please vote no on this restrictive and damaging bill.

Sincerely,

Allison Reynolds-Berry, Executive Director

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