

## **More Good- More Bad- More Ugly**

**Tom Moscovic-Legislative Chair**

### **2023 – A Year Workers Voices Were Heard and Pushed Representative**

#### **Democracy Forward**

In 2023 here in Ohio we made our voices heard loud and clear in August and November elections. Democracy prevailed and we the people kept our rights. The Ohio AFL-CIO local federations saw 162 of the 206 endorsed local candidates win placing 27 of the 43 union members in local office, board and council positions. That is Union Strong in action. We made progress in state funding of education highlighting the need for less reliance on property taxes. For retirees more pensions got PBG support from the American Rescue Plan Butch Lewis Act. The public pension systems years of political pressure and big Wall Street deals is now under scrutiny. We made progress in funding home and community based long term care in the state budget. The worker elected and work friendly Biden administration is forcing Big Pharma to show up and bargain Medicare Rx Drug prices because we demand it. Not a bad year for the chaos in Congress and the Ohio General Assembly.

#### **Senate Bill 83 is SB 5 Redo to Take Apart Collective Bargain a Piece at a Time**

SB 83 is an attack on the substance of collective bargaining and the freedom of speech in the workplace. This is how little fiefdoms are born and grow into intimidation and dictatorial bosses refusing to hear worker voices. SB83 is BAD for Students. BAD for Higher Education. BAD for Ohio. Attacks academic freedom, tenure, students' freedom to learn. Weaponizes "intellectual diversity" to censor honest, inclusive education and critical thinking. Dismisses race, culture, identity, lived experience as "controversial beliefs and policies". Attacks workers' rights, creating unfit working conditions and unsafe learning environments. Leaves students unprepared for multicultural, global workplaces that prioritize DEI and critical thinking. More specifics can be found at: <https://www.honestyforohioeducation.org/sb-83.html> This is the road we have traveled before. This is the road that said "No Irish Need Apply", "Italians unwanted", "Poles can only work x jobs, Hunkies cannot skill up to that department". This is the road to fascist indoctrination and big brother dictating what is OK to think. Matt Smith, Ohio AFL-CIO Legislative Director provides the following update as part of our Union Strong solidarity against Senate Bill 83- the Higher Education destruction act. "I am writing with the unfortunate news that SB 83 passed out of the House Higher Education committee this morning after an 8-7 vote. Chairman Young did not allow any verbal testimony after adding the bill to the committee agenda less than 24 hours in advance of the hearing. Vice-chair Manning actually called for the vote over objections from Democrats. It is widely known that she had been a NO vote on the bill until very recently. For Representative Manning to flip without a clear reason, is very frustrating. Some legislators think that because the anti-strike language was removed, that our concerns have been addressed. That is simply not true. Senate Bill 83 still includes anti-collective bargaining language that some would argue, is even worse than the inclusion of the original anti-strike language. Any attack on collective bargaining is an attack on labor. This is a bad bill for workers, a bad bill for students, and could really put our institutions of higher learning at a competitive disadvantage moving forward.

While an irritating turn of events, we must continue the fight and turn up the pressure. We must do all we can to keep SB 83 off the House floor ..... Now would be the time to reach out to them and ask for a NO ON SB 83 should it come up for a floor vote . Also, be on the lookout for any Representatives attending holiday gatherings- that is a great place to remind them of our adamant opposition to this direct attack. I should also mention that two Republican Reps voted no with all of the Democratic committee members- Reps Gail Pavliga and Justin Pizzulli. We appreciate all seven of the reps who stood with us on this vote." Advocacy Action Ask Find You State Representative at: <https://ohiohouse.gov/> and use this time to call and email them. Message is simple NO ON SB 83.

## Parents' Bill Of Rights' on School Curriculum Content Proposed in Ohio Senate

An Ohio House bill to notify parents of any content in state schools that may contain "sexuality" was introduced before an Ohio Senate committee earlier this month.

Critics likened the bill to Florida's "[Don't Say Gay](#)" bill, which was implemented in 2022 and bars classroom discussion for some grade levels on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Republican co-sponsors state Rep. D.J. Swearingen, R-Huron, and Rep. [Sara Carruthers](#), R-Hamilton, brought the bill before the Senate Education Committee.

"This is a common sense bill that simply acknowledges the fundamental role that parents play in the life of their children," Swearingen told the committee. "It is statistically undeniable that when parents are involved in their kids' lives, kids succeed."

During its run through the House, the bill was opposed by a variety of youth advocacy groups, including the Kaleidoscope Youth Center, the Children's Defense Fund-Ohio and the Trevor Project, along with some school districts, the ACLU of Ohio, the Ohio Education Association and the Ohio School Counselor Association.

The groups took issue with House Bill 8's language, which requires schools to notify parents and allows parents to remove students from classes based on the "sexuality content" of those classes, and amendments made [while the bill was still in the House](#) that LGBTQ advocates said made topics related to the LGBTQ community "perhaps inappropriate for the classroom," according to Equality Ohio's then-spokesperson Kathryn Poe, during the House committee process.

Mallory Golski, civic engagement and advocacy manager at Kaleidoscope Youth Center said calling the content "sexuality content," the bill is targeting LGBTQIA+ youth and even something as simple as a story that they might be reading in English class, if there is a queer character in that story, that can be flagged as sexuality content."

In the Dec. 5 committee hearing before the Senate Education Committee, Carruthers, however, likened the regulations under the bill to the process that would take place if a child was hurt in the park and an ambulance was called.

"Who do they call to find out your child's medical history or allergic reactions to medications?"

Carruthers posed to the committee. "Somehow, I don't believe they would call the school to find out this information."

Swearingen said the bill "protects a parent's ability to direct their child's physical and mental health." To do so, the school districts are "prohibited from keeping changes in the health of the student from their parents, and the school district is also prohibited from encouraging the student to hide these issues from their parents," he told the committee.

That is part of the problem youth advocacy and education groups have with the bill, saying that opens the door for children to be "outed" for their gender identity or sexual orientation, when such information might put them at risk in certain households.

At the committee hearing, the bill received revisions through a substitute bill, which made changes "per the revised federal code," according to Carruthers. She said the sponsors had "been working very closely" with committee chair state Sen. Andrew Brenner, R-Delaware, on the sub bill.

The bill included definitions for the terms "age-appropriate" and "developmentally appropriate," which were modeled after existing federal definitions. Federal law uses those definitions for "activities or items that are generally accepted as suitable for children of the same chronological age or maturity" or "typical for an age or age group," according to state Sen. Sandra O'Brien, R-Ashtabula, who presented the substitute bill to the committee.