

As a Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) student at the Ohio State University (OSU), I have been passionate in both my scholarship and activist work to advocate for women's rights in the Columbus community. My longest sustained engagement has been with Enlighten, an anti-human trafficking organization at OSU. I have been serving as president for the organization for over two years now, and throughout my time, we have held dozens of service events with local anti-human trafficking organizations—most of which primarily supporting women victims and survivors.

I have been vocal against institutional censorship that prevents meaningful discussion against 'controversial topics' like climate change or abortion. The Advance Ohio Higher Education Act (commonly called 'SB 1') explicitly prevents university offices and faculty from taking a stance on 'controversial topics'. The examples that the legislation lays out—diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), climate policies, electoral politics, immigration policy, abortion, among others—target the humanities and social sciences (especially WGSS) and prevent the fields from being able to fulfill its academic mission. I had been part of the eight hours and over 700 submissions of opponent testimony. Despite the bill passing to law on March 28 of this year, I continue to stay in the fight for true intellectual diversity that *challenges* the status quo by attending protests, teach-ins, and meetings with fellow student activists.

Most recently, I have been leading OSU's WGSS Honor Society and cultivated it as a safe feminist space where students can find avenues to engage in the scholar-activist-artist trifecta through fulfilling ways. We are currently accepting submissions for our yearly zine (this year's theme being 'Controversial Topics,' following SB 1) where anyone can apply regardless of skill, and in the works for a monthly Feminist Film Series to be held next semester, where WGSS students can come together into community and enjoy a watch party with their peers.

What has been most memorable, however, has been my experience working as a canvasser for One Fair Wage (OFW). Throughout 2023, OFW has made it its mission to raise Ohio's minimum wage to 15 dollars. What made their mission especially impactful was their focus on abolishing the *subminimum* wage. A loophole that allows employers to pay underage youth, disabled folks, and tipped workers less than the designated minimum wage, subminimum wages target women workers who occupy the majority of the service sector. My own mother supported me waitressing at restaurants, where much of her income relied on tips. I also had experience working in food service, where I had to endure uncomfortable interactions with certain customers to ensure I would get adequately tipped out by the end of the night. These personal-is-political histories motivated me to join OFW's mission.

As a canvasser, I had the opportunity to connect with a diverse array of people, including women who worked in the service economy while earning less-than-minimum wage. They shared with me their own experiences of precarity and vulnerability as not just a service worker, but as a *woman* service worker. Domestic duties like food preparation, meal serving, and cleaning are already feminized, and looked down upon by the patriarchal public. When these jobs are occupied by women themselves, the worker becomes further vulnerable to these undermining perceptions that lead to workplace abuse. With many of those same roles being tipped labor, the pay system further disenfranchises these workers from speaking out. These labor politics were clearly reflected in the lived experiences of those that agreed to sign OFW's ballot initiative. Establishing a livable wage—and abolishing the subminimum wage in the process—is a feminist task.

Through my experience with OFW, as well as the numerous tabling events I have staffed on behalf of Enlighten, Freedom a la Cart, and OSU's Department of WGSS, I realized how

skilled I was in community engagement and outreach. It was work that I found fulfilling as well, and I knew that it would be something I would continue to do as an activist. Starting in January of next year, I will be working with The Outreach Team in Columbus as a door-to-door fundraising canvasser for Planned Parenthood. The right to reproductive freedom has been enshrined in Ohio's constitution, through the efforts of paid and volunteer canvassers and voters who cast their supporting ballots during the November 2023 election. Despite the clear will of Ohioans, the current state legislature insists upon violating reproductive rights in order to preserve our state's perceived conservatism. The fight is not over, and I hope to use my community-building abilities to protect the freedoms that should rightfully be ours.

In terms of long-term goals, I hope to receive my Ph.D. in English with a concentration in WGSS, and do critical humanities research on popular languages and rhetorics that shape and impact feminism. But I must emphasize that knowledge production happens everywhere, and much of my insights as a scholar-activist have come from my experiences 'on-the-ground' talking to fellow community members about local and national politics. As I have seen from many of my professors, I hope to be a researcher and educator who is fully immersed in her community.