

Thank you for allowing me to testify today.

My name is Sarah Druhan. I am a recent graduate of the Ohio State University. I was born in Cincinnati, and grew up in Upper Arlington, a suburb of Columbus. I am extremely grateful for the education the state of Ohio has given me throughout my life, from kindergarten to my senior year of college, and I oppose the passing of HB 151.

I oppose this bill because I believe it will do more harm than good. This bill, while wanting to support “intellectual diversity,” seems to contradict itself by actively dictating a certain perspective that will ultimately be more restricting to the learning and even safety of students in Ohio.

In my experience, I have never felt as though diversity, equity, and inclusion policies are looking to enforce a certain set of beliefs onto students or minimize one’s personal identity. Because of these policies, I have not only felt more able to connect with my own identity and background, but also to understand how in encouraging discussion around the differences of people in my community, we are all able to connect more over what we have in common: our humanity.

By discouraging these discussions, the supporters of this bill seem to want to act as though all students in Ohio are the exact same. This idea not only would make our world less rich and interesting, but would diminish the value of each of our unique identities, the very opposite of what this bill claims it wants to do.

The fact of the matter is that we all indeed come from different places and live in an excitingly diverse world. I believe that treating this like it is a bad thing not only sets a dangerous authoritarian precedent that would limit the kinds of discussions Ohioans will feel free to have, but would also tell a story that is deeply untrue.

In conclusion, I oppose HB 151 because I believe that our world is a diverse one, and acknowledging that has helped me to thrive as a person and a student in Ohio. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.