

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Miller, and members of the House Higher Education Committee -

Citizens for a Better Beavercreek strongly and resolutely opposes those elements of House Bill 151 that attack Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. DEI is not a political issue, and we strongly condemn those who would attempt to make it one. Promoting an appreciation of the perspectives, experiences, and histories of all Americans, regardless of their race or sex, is the very foundation of diversity education. How can anyone justify opposing that? Working to ensure all Americans truly have a fair opportunity to avail themselves of the promise of the American Dream is at the heart of equity initiatives – shouldn't that be the goal of all Americans? *E pluribus unum* – out of many, one – has long been the motto of the United States in recognition that our nation includes people with many different backgrounds, races, and ethnicities – and it is through that inclusiveness that we become one as a nation. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion has always been central to the very identity of the United States.

You need to think about the message you send when you attack DEI efforts – for one, many people of color feel that their histories, perspectives, and experiences are being dismissed when DEI is attacked. Because one purpose of DEI is to give voice to the perspectives of those who have traditionally been oppressed and marginalized, for many people of color it feels as though they are being dismissed and marginalized all over again when DEI is targeted. You should be concerned about how your actions impact your constituents of color.

It is also worth noting that attacks against DEI place you on the same side as white supremacists, whose sneering dismissal of anything DEI-related is rooted in their bigotry and sense of racial superiority – do you really want to be seen as supporting that?

Finally, it is simply un-American for you as elected representatives to tell us as constituents that we can't talk about race in certain ways at colleges and universities, that we can't express certain ideas in trainings, that we can't promote certain values simply because you as politicians disagree with them. There are few things more un-American than using legislative power to silence ideas you disagree with, particularly when those ideas relate to appreciation of the diversity of, a focus on ensuring equitable opportunities for, and a recognition of the importance of including ALL Ohioans.

We call on all Ohio legislators to promote, support, and uphold the ideals that make our country great, and forgo any attacks whatsoever on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Anything less is a betrayal of our country's ideals.

Sincerely,

Citizens for a Better Beavercreek
Beavercreek, Ohio