

**Opposition to HB 151
Higher Education Committee
May 17, 2023**

**Kristian Crider, Organizer
Ohio Student Association**

Dear, Chairman Young, Ranking Member Miller, and House Higher Education Committee

Thank you for allowing me to testify today in opposition to 151. My name is Kristian Crider. I am a first-generation college student from Cleveland, OH and graduate as of 4 days ago from Kent State University. While also attending school full-time I worked for the Ohio Student Association, a statewide grassroots organization led by young people and anchored by student-led chapters on college campuses across the state that organizes issue campaigns to fight for a future where each and every single one of us can thrive. I'm also a member of Black United Students, an organization whose mission is to to serve and unify all Black students at Kent State University by addressing their needs.

I'm here today to express my personal concern for HB 151, specifically the banning of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. I would like to share that only 27 percent of first-generation students finish college within four years. Black students are already facing multiple barriers within higher education. In Ohio, "black students are half as likely to complete a degree at a public four-year institution compared to white students. The six-year grad rate for black students in Ohio is about 30 percent, compared to 40 percent for black students nationally. I would like to share that personally, In every single one of my classes when I came to KSU I was the only Black student in my class, it was a culture shock. I felt like an outsider everywhere I would go. Isolated. An Imposter. **Not included.** It wasn't until I came across organizations on campus such as the Student Multicultural Center, Sister circle, and Black United Students, all organizations that would be stripped of its core values and funding if this bill was enacted. If it were not for DEI I certainly wouldn't be standing here before you today.

A couple of weeks ago I went to our psychological services seeking mental health help. I came to them expressing a couple of things I had been struggling with at the time and they summed it up to depression/anxiety. After another session with them they expressed that they diagnosed me based on an assessment they give every college student across the country seeking psychological services and found that I exceeded those parameters to assist me. If it weren't for the counselor I spoke with having DEI training and consulting with a colleague she wouldn't have referred me to the Black Mental Health Corp out of Cleveland, OH who properly diagnosed me with PTSD among other things and who was able to properly treat me.

Black students make up just shy of 8% of KSU's population, Black students are underrepresented and underserved across Ohio and at KSU, we face daily microaggressions and just blatant racism. An event that I'll never forget and one that truly scarred me was when students spray painted "White Lives Matter" and "Blacks Have no Home Here" on an expression rock in front of campus for everyone to see." In result of this KSU created an anti-racism task force whose mission is to examine the ways that racism, particularly anti-Black racism, exist and persist at KSU. Without such resources and actions from the university students would feel uncomfortable and not included.

Seeing this bill attempt to ban DEI, I couldn't help but to ask the question of why we have DEI in the first place? DEI was implemented for people of different races, abilities, ages, genders, religion, sexual orientation, and other diverse backgrounds so they can be more comfortable in different settings such as work and school. I would like to highlight the significant difference between Equity, which this bill is trying to ban and the idea of "equality". Equality means each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities. Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome. "Equality is giving everyone the same pair of shoes. Equity is giving everyone a pair of shoes that fits." This bill is a target and is very detrimental to Black Students Education. And prosperity on campus. How can we ensure we are meeting every student's needs?

If this bill was passed I'm scared that students won't feel included at their university. If this bill was passed I'm scared that my professors might get that 1 student who still doesn't agree with what's being taught even after the revision of their material and their families reap those consequences. If this bill was passed

i'm scared that It would leave so many students uneducated. If we continue to **CENSOR** education. Students wouldn't know that Black History Month was first established at KSU, first observed by the organization Black United Students, students wouldn't know who truly build this country, lastly, students wouldn't know what Honest education is including **systematic racism**.

Again, I'm testifying in opposition to HB 151 With all of this being said, I ask that you please consider my testimony in opposition of HB 151, Thank you.