

Hello, my name is Casey Smith. I am a Public Administration and Political Science major at Muskingum University and plan to further my studies by pursuing a Master's in Public Administration at the Ohio state university's John Glenn College of public affairs. Upon acceptance to both universities, I was asked similar questions: How would I contribute to diversity on campus and why diversity was important to me. To answer OSU's application question, I referred to my time at Muskingum as the president of The Black Student Union. In this position, I was able to advocate for a safe space where students could gather. The multicultural room, that we now have, is located in a building funded by donations from groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. . . .The three plaques that commemorated their contributions were only recently removed from the building after 90 years . . . In a space funded by a group driven by hate and division, I was able to help create a space that embodies acceptance and unity. It is within this same space that students have come to me in tears because they feel unsafe by how our society has found it acceptable to treat them. . . The passing of this bill allows for individuals who create this feeling of hatred to remain unchecked and uneducated. A sense of acceptance is something I would like to bring with me to OSU, but I am afraid that this bill will stop me and other students from being able to discuss difficult topics, leading to deeper division — something this bill will supposedly put an end to. My passion for advocacy and social justice is what drew

me to the John Glenn College of Public Affairs. Their class offerings allow me to discuss the deeply embedded and controversial issues that this country continues to run from. The university's offering of a full-ride scholarship has only intensified my love for advocacy not only for individuals similar to me, but for those who don't look like me, think like me, or love like me. At a time when I should be proud of my accomplishments, this bill has cast a shadow of hopelessness for my own future career and for the safe spaces in Ohio that this bill is going to destroy.