

Opponent Testimony for HB 6 / SB 1
Elizabeth Kenyon PhD, Associate Professor of Social Studies Education
Kent State University
Senate Higher Education Committee
March 2, 2025

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Senator Ingram, and Members of the Higher Education Committee:

Thank you for receiving my written testimony. My name is Elizabeth Kenyon.

I come today writing in strong opposition to House Bill Six and Senate Bill One. I come as a citizen, a social studies teacher educator, and as a parent of children who attend public schools in Ohio. While I am on the social studies education faculty at Kent State University, I do not represent Kent State University but rather am submitting my testimony as a private citizen. Senate Bill One will not only have a negative impact on Ohio's great state university system, it will also contribute to the teacher shortage problem in the state of Ohio.

As a citizen of Kent Ohio, and a member of the Kent State community, I know the impact that our institutions have not only on Ohio broadly speaking, but also the economy and communities in Ohio. Universities and their students bring life, vibrancy, and knowledge to the state. They attract out of state talent through staff, faculty, and students. They bring young people to Ohio and keep young people in Ohio who may otherwise leave.

I know that higher education will be damaged by this bill. It will negatively impact who is willing to come to Ohio as a student, faculty, or staff member of these universities, and it will send some Ohioans out of state in search of higher education that better meets their needs. As a mother, I do not think I would encourage my kids to stay in Ohio for their higher education given the limits of this bill. I have watched friends and colleagues go through these transitions in

other states like Florida and I have seen many of them leave their jobs and their states. I do not want to leave a job I love, but part of why I love my job is because of what Kent State is, a strong university that serves ALL students, particularly first-generation students, veterans and others, and this bill would drastically alter that.

My primary concern is the removal of all supports for students that might be in some way based on an identity. I personally know many students from marginalized groups who have only succeeded in our program because of our office of diversity and outreach and because of scholarships and programming explicitly designed to support them. They are in no way less capable or receiving handouts, they simply come from places that have been historically under invested in, they have not received the benefits of a white middle-class family. Furthermore, they are having to navigate a higher education system that was built for wealthy white people. This programming supports students with many identities including first generation students, most of whom are white, as well as others. These former students are brilliant capable educators, dedicated to their communities and they are currently working in Ohio public schools, often in areas where teachers are hard to hire and keep. They are providing crucial representation for their students. The support they relied on as students would no longer exist under HB 6/SB 1.

Again, as a citizen of Ohio, and as a social studies teacher educator, I urge you to oppose House Bill Six / Senate Bill One. Thank you, again, for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions or provide additional information.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elizabeth Kenyon

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