

Written Opponent Testimony for Senate Bill 1
Sponsored by Higher Education Committee
March 11, 2025

Krystina Pratt
PAEMST

Mr. Chairman, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Mrs. Piccolantonio, and members of the Workforce & Higher Education committee,

Thank you for taking the time to read my written testimony. My name is Krystina Pratt and I am representing myself as a PAEMST Recipient, which is the highest honor bestowed upon educators in the United States, awarded by The White House and The National Science Foundation.

SB1 is built on a lie—the false idea that diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts discriminate against white, cis-gendered, able-bodied men. There is no evidence to support this claim—only evidence to refute it.

Despite claims that DEI marginalizes white people, **72% of higher-ed faculty and nearly half of all college students are white**. Even in corporate spaces, DEI efforts benefit white men—28 CEOs, mostly white, collectively earned \$5 million in 2023 for meeting DEI goals (Zappia, 2024; Keenan, 2024).

Additionally, **SB1 would harm rural students**, making up one-third of enrolled K-12 students. Approximately *95% of Ohio's rural population is white* (Frey). Last year, the Rural Postsecondary and Economic Development (RPED) grant program provided \$44.5 million, demonstrating the need for continued support.

DEI also supports white men like my friend Eric, a veteran who recently received The Tillman Scholarship. **DEI fosters workplace understanding for veterans** with PTSD, traumatic brain injuries, and movement restrictions. (Stewart, 2025)

Proponent testimony from Mr. Cirino states, “Ohio’s continued economic advancements require this.” However, decades of research confirm that effective **DEI efforts create better workplaces and stronger economies**. A McKinsey & Company report states that **closing the racial wealth gap could add \$1 trillion to the U.S. economy by 2028**. (McKinsey & Company, 2019)

In his testimony, Mr. Cirino cites education philosopher John Dewey. Yet Dewey himself advocated for cultural diversity in education as essential for democracy. SB1 contradicts his very principles of ‘cultural pluralism.’

In response to Mr. Cirino’s mention of the five institutions supporting this bill, I’d like to bring attention to the National Association of Scholars (NAS). A page on their website titled “Our

Work,” shares how this right-wing organization tracks ‘cancel culture’ on college campuses, to promote freedom of thought.

Here are a few examples of the ‘intellectual diversity’ they aim to defend.

2/17/2022 - Clayton Looney - University of Montana. Mr. Looney, a white man, allegedly **used the N-word** in texts to his black ex-wife, and allegedly called his daughter the N-word. He also allegedly referred to Muslims wearing "towel wraps."

2/1/2022 - Stephen Kershner - State University of New York at Fredonia. Professor Kershner appeared on an episode of the Brain in a Vat podcast called "Sexual Taboos." In the episode, **he questioned whether "adult-child sex" is always wrong.**

6/5/2020 - Douglas Brooks - Miami University Professor Brooks allegedly **called a group of Black Lives Matter protesters “monkeys.”**

6/25/2021 - Monte Miller - East Carolina University. Professor Miller posted on Facebook "Hey there. How about **F*CK Juneteenth!!!!**"

Juneteenth is the day Americans celebrate as the emancipation of slavery. *This* is the kind of ideology SB1 aligns with. Take for example, president of NAS, Peter Wood. Wood has authored several books, including *1620: A Critical Response to the 1619 Project*. His book aims to refute claims made by Nikole Hannah-Jones, specifically her assertion that slavery has shaped modern day America.

Peter Wood calls slavery 'ignominious (shameful), not dehumanizing' and even claims **enslaved Africans were 'better off in Virginia,' falsely equating slavery to indentured servitude** (Wood 2021).

On a podcast appearance, in reference to the brutal murder of George Floyd, Wood stated “I prefer to say ‘his death in police custody’” (Walton, 2021). Officer Derek Chauvin was tried and convicted of Floyd’s murder and is currently serving decades in prison.

There is nothing ‘intellectually diverse’ about the aforementioned statements that SB1 aims to promote. This bill is not an attempt to eliminate “institutional discrimination,” as Mr. Cirino claims.

SB1 is an attempt to put paddles on the dying heart of white supremacy. Listen to opponents when we say; **it is time to pull the plug.** Not everything is up for debate. Deeming the identities and lived experiences of others as “controversial” does not foster ‘intellectual diversity,’ it fosters hate.

For the future of Ohio and its most vulnerable citizens, I urge you to oppose Senate Bill 1.

Thank you,
Krystina Pratt, M.Ed.

References

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- Zappia.com. (2024). *Chief Diversity Officer demographics and statistics in the US*.

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: 3/9/2025

Name: Krystina Pratt - PAEMST Awardee

Are you representing: Yourself Organization

Organization (If Applicable): n/a

Position/Title: _____

Address: 338 E. Park St.

City: Westerville State: OH Zip: 43081

Best Contact Telephone: (614) 937 2421 Email: pratt.krystina@gmail.com

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): SB1

Specific Issue: Advance Higher Education Act

Are you testifying as a: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? n/a unable to attend in-person

Please provide a brief statement on your position:

I am asking Representatives to vehemently reject SB1. See attached written statement with cited references.

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