

March 3, 2025

Tom Young, Chairman

OHR Workforce and Higher Education Committee

Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony on Substitute Senate Bill 1/HB6. I am testifying as an independent citizen in opposition to this bill. It is unconstitutional and discriminatory.

Our US Declaration of Independence states that “all men are created equal”. Yet, we are not given equal opportunities. Individuals of various races, sexual orientations, gender identities, and economic backgrounds do not have the same opportunities presented to other individuals. Offices of Diversity and Inclusion help to bridge this gap. Without DEI offices/departments, we are created equal yet treated unequally. Prohibiting the establishment or continuation of DEI offices/departments is blatantly unconstitutional and an abuse of power.

Expanding the list of public employees who are prohibited from striking to include full-time faculty members limits the freedom of speech of Ohio citizens. This is a huge increase in the number of people who are prohibited from striking and there is no constitutional justification for this change.

As an engineer, I always try to have diversity on my teams. This is not because I am trying to meet a quota or because I want to cater to people’s feelings. I aim to have a diverse team because diverse teams produce diverse ideas. If everyone comes from a different background, we look at problems from a different perspective and approach problems differently. Every problem in engineering has multiple solutions, multiple ways to be solved. By limiting the diversity on an engineering team, the solutions are greatly limited as well.

Overall, this bill greatly limits the freedom of Ohio citizens. It is unconstitutional and an abuse of power. This bill will demolish decades of progress in higher education. It is for these reasons that I greatly oppose the passing of this bill and urge Ohio leaders not to pass it.

I appreciate your consideration of my concerns.

Thank you,

Victoria Blanc