

I am horrified that a SB 1, which was overwhelmingly opposed in public testimony, was subsequently passed out of committee. This is the opposite of how a democracy should run.

My name is Amanda Hayes. I teach at a rural university campus, and I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

My students are scared by this bill. They are terrified that it will mean an end to free speech in the classroom, where they cannot discuss important topics that might be deemed “controversial” by their government. This is not how free speech is supposed to operate. It would also decimate majors such as social work, a field that we as a nation are desperate to fill. The fact that this bill is being pushed by the party that claims to support small government is particularly horrifying, as it will constitute government overreach into our schools in the grossest manner.

I would also like to take a moment to speak on behalf of myself, my students, and my colleagues who have reason to fear for our very lives due to this bill. Threats of violence against women and minorities is at an all-time high, and unchecked gun violence has made schools far too dangerous as it is. Exposing our classroom materials to potential predators, who find any differences reason enough to commit murder, puts us all at unnecessary risk. I have colleagues who have already been threatened as it is. Higher education is essential to thriving economies, a healthy democracy, and a happy society. This bill attacks all of these.

Students and teachers are the ones who will suffer most under this bill, but the repercussions for our entire state will be dire. Please, listen to us. I ask you to vote NO on this destructive and discriminatory bill.