

Opponent Testimony for SB1
Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee
Submitted via email on Friday, March 7, 2025 for the opponent hearing scheduled on March 11,
2025

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Veteran public high school English teacher

Thank you for the opportunity to offer written testimony against SB1. I am a resident of Oxford, Ohio, and an assistant professor of education at Miami University, where I have taught since Fall 2021. I do not represent Miami University; instead, I am submitting testimony as a private citizen. I write to you **in complete opposition of SB1**. One of my primary concerns, as outlined in this testimony, is the effect SB1 would have on the undergraduate and graduate education of future and current educators (e.g., pre-service and in-service elementary, middle, and high school teachers).

SB1 prohibits any DEI-related trainings and programs, which would directly prevent faculty in education and teacher preparation programs to train future educators in working with a diverse population of clients. SB1 does not provide a definition of DEI, but it does seem to conflate it exclusively to race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and gender (lines 625-626). These are identity markers that are at the core of teaching and learning - who we are as teachers, what we know about the world and those who inhabit it, and all of those included in our service as educators. It is impossible to contextualize our nation's public schools without consideration of these inherent factors of being human.

A multicultural, inclusive, and representative education, in our nation's K-12 schools, and in the higher education preparation for teaching K-12 students, has been deemed most effective, humanizing, and socially just for the most number of citizens by nearly all educational research since the early 1990s (e.g. Banks, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1996; Smitherman, 1997; Kumashiro, 2001; Milner, 2012; Paris, 2012; Love, 2021, 2023). I learned this as an educator in Chicago Public Schools, where I served, for ten years, between two schools which served an under-resourced, systematically segregated demographic of Black and African American students of whom 99% qualified for free and reduced priced lunch. I learned quickly that my teacher training program did not prepare me in the **most important aspect of being an effective educator: the whole human**. How identities intersect to create socio-cultural understandings of lived experience. That, by our very nature, the human condition is cut, like a unique diamond, into facets of identity that make up who we are... and how we learn... and how we teach. I have two Masters degrees in Education and a PhD in Language, Literacy, and Culture. I have spent the last 25 years teaching and learning and learning about teaching and learning to gain the necessary expertise to give expert testimony in cases such as this. **This is why I support SB1 and argue its passing would have detrimental effects on human rights, civil rights, and the public good of educating our nation's youth to be the future of tomorrow.**

If it should pass, my expert advice would be for all those who wish to be teachers, and all teacher educators – including myself – to leave Ohio to prepare themselves elsewhere, as teacher preparation without including the intersections of human identity would be no preparation at all.

Sincerely,
Kelli Rushek, PhD.
Oxford, Ohio