

Testimony of Ethan Lucas
Before the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee
Rep. Tom Young, Chair
March 11, 2025

Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and Members of the Higher Education Committee:

My name is Ethan Lucas, and I am a student of English and political science at The Ohio State University. I do not represent OSU in any capacity and am submitting testimony as a private citizen.

I am testifying to oppose House Bill 6 on the grounds that it will make Ohio a less attractive option for businesses and chase away members of the academic community, weakening our standing nationally and globally. While I could speak to this committee about the social ills of telling members of the community who directly rely upon DEI for a sense of belonging and safety on their campuses, you will hear that testimony from hundreds of other students, professors, and Ohioans who can see it for the unarguable fact that it is. The fact of the matter is that the students who have not yet become enraged at the repeated attacks on their academic institutions have turned despondent. They have witnessed their legislature tell them that their experiences, thoughts, and opinions are invalid and unimportant. Where they might have imagined another line of defense in the institutions they fought for throughout the hearings on SB1, they have been met with further resignation. Students have been thoroughly disabused of the notion that anyone, besides their fellow students, is fighting for them.

Members of the committee, make no mistake, this despondency is the beginning of a far more dangerous movement in Ohio. Prospective students notice these heinous efforts to undermine academic excellence and see a reason to steer clear of Ohio and her universities. They want to go where they will be valued for the contributions they have to make, and moreover, they want to go somewhere that prepares them to be vital and active competitors in the workforce. The passage of this bill would ensure that this state is not a place where that preparation is offered. Businesses want this as well. They wish to bring their infrastructure and job opportunities to areas that are rife with talented, well-rounded, and educated people that will benefit their companies rather than weigh them down. By passing this legislation, you would be telling these businesses to offer employment opportunities to other states and regions, simply because they value diverse perspectives and thoughts that enhance learning for future workers.

Furthermore, as a political science student, I find it necessary to recognize the historical significance of seeking to close minority voices out of public spaces and ignore their warnings for society at large. By pretending like these communities and the inequalities they face do not exist, you do not make them go away. You only exacerbate them. Throughout history, this

tactic has led to unimaginable violence for the society at large. Do not let Ohio be a perpetrator of this violence against her own citizens. I urge you, on my behalf and that of those who are not able to submit testimony to this committee, to vote against the passage of this bill and make the right decision for Ohioans. Thank you.