

Testimony of Dr. Jasmine Moses

Before the House Higher Education Committee

Representative Tom Young, Chair

March 11th, 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Dr. Jasmine Moses. I stand before you as an Early Childhood Educator and Community Worker, a first-generation college student of two hard-working parents, and a proud three-time graduate of Kent State University. My favorite title that I hold is “Mama” to a young toddler, whom I hope will be a Kent State graduate in the future (fingers crossed). I am here today as a private citizen.

I am a proud Ohio native, born and raised on Cleveland’s East Side in a diverse community. From a young age, I knew I wanted to become an educator. When I transferred to Kent State University in my sophomore year, I quickly learned what it meant to attend a Predominantly White Institution (PWI). In 2014, Black students made up just 8% of the total student population at Kent State.

If not for programs like Diversity Outreach and Development, the Student Multicultural Center, the Integrated Greek Council, and countless other support systems, I would not be standing before you today as a three-time Kent State graduate and a Doctor of Education. These programs did not divide students; they ensured that students like me—who often felt invisible in predominantly white spaces—had the resources, mentorship, and sense of belonging necessary to thrive.

That’s why I, like many others, am deeply concerned about the weaponization of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and the dangerously vague language of this bill. It fosters confusion about what DEI truly represents and falsely portrays identity-affirming programs as sources of division rather than necessary supports.

Through the overwhelming critique of the bill during its time in the Senate, the students of today and yesterday have made it clear that these programs contribute to greater academic success, retention, and well-being.

However, I want to shift the focus beyond myself. I am here advocating for a group that I'm sure everyone in this room cares about—our children. You might wonder how this connects. Let me be clear: the students in our colleges today are the future teachers, administrators, and policymakers shaping the next generation.

My dissertation research focused on Anti-Bias Education, and the evidence is clear—DEI initiatives are essential in preparing future educators to navigate our diverse world.

During my time at Kent State, I had the privilege of learning from brilliant scholars who are actively transforming education through equity and inclusion. This bill would dismantle the support systems that allow such critical work to continue, cutting students off from mentorship, research, and community—tools that directly contribute to their success.

At a time when critical thinking is already lacking in our country, stripping DEI from higher education only weakens our ability to foster thoughtful, informed, and compassionate educators.

If we genuinely care about education, we must ensure that the people responsible for teaching our children are learning in environments that embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our goal should not be to create teachers who only serve Ohio students; instead, we should cultivate educators prepared to engage with a global society.

I urge you to take my testimony to heart and **VOTE NO** on this bill before it harms not only Ohio's current students but the generations to come. Thank you for your time. I welcome any questions.

I respectfully submit this testimony as a private citizen,

Dr. Jasmine Moses