

Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and members of the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide written testimony.

My name is Keith Lanser, and while I am both a student and staff member at the University of Cincinnati, the opinions I share today are my own and do not reflect those of the University of Cincinnati.

I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill, HB 6.

A few weeks ago, I provided both written and in-person testimony against SB 1. In my testimony, I spoke about how SB 1 will shut down one of the programs I oversee, called RAPP. RAPP was created almost 40 years ago in response to horribly racist parties that took place on our campus, known as the MLK Trash Parties. These parties were attended exclusively by white students, who were required to wear racist costumes or bring racist props to gain admittance. The purpose of these parties was to mock Dr. King, who had been assassinated only 15 years prior. It is important to note that these racist parties occurred during the first year in which MLK Day was recognized by the state of Ohio. These parties were so hateful and vile that both *CityBeat* and *The New York Times* covered the story.

RAPP was created in response to these racist events as a way for students from every racial background to engage in honest and open dialogue about race and racism on campus. RAPP was so successful that it was formally recognized by both the City of Cincinnati and the Ohio House of Representatives.

I am angry that this bill will effectively kill this vital and historic program—one that was once recognized by this very governing body. What has changed over time? The difference is that this legislative body has been gerrymandered into oblivion. We are now represented by extremist conservative politicians who are not accountable to voters because politicians choose their districts when voters should be choosing their politicians. Democracy is dead in Ohio, and you are complicit in that.

This bill is anti-democratic. I find it absolutely appalling that you are set to pass a bill that had only 13 people submit written testimony in favor of it—most of whom represented out-of-state special interests. Only one student from Ohio provided written testimony in support of this bill, and not a single student testified in person in favor of it. Meanwhile, over 1,000 people submitted written testimony against this bill, including hundreds of students, faculty, and staff members from across the state. Hundreds of us, including myself, testified in person against this bill. This bill is not popular. The only people who want it to pass are extremist conservative politicians and special interest groups hell-bent on shoving white supremacy down our throats.

Shame on all of you for making SB 1 the number one priority of our legislative body, and shame on all of us for letting this happen.

I urge you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this extreme bill.