

Testimony of Quentin Kelly  
Before the House Higher Education Committee  
Representative Tom Young, Chair  
March 8, 2025

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

My name is Quentin Kelly, and I am a first-year student at the University of Cincinnati. I do not represent the University of Cincinnati but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen.

I strongly oppose Senate Bill 1 due to the fact that encouraging diversity in schools allows students to get an education which will better prepare them to positively impact our society.

Senate Bill 1 seeks to eliminate departments and funding related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. One of the duties of the University of Cincinnati's Office of Equity and Inclusion is to respond to allegations of discrimination or harassment. I know multiple students who are parts of minorities, and I've been able to see first-hand the positive effects of having an office dedicated to ensuring that they feel safe on campus and that they are able to have the same opportunities as other students. It is vitally important for students to feel safe and supported at their school, and attempting to block anything related to diversity, equity, and inclusion will make colleges a more hostile environment for those students.

I am studying Civil Engineering, which is a profession with a much higher percentage of men compared to women. I am very grateful to be studying at a school that has encouraged diversity. In our first-year engineering and design thinking class, we were taught that the first step of the design thinking process is to empathize. This is important, since engineers cannot come up with a solution to a problem if they do not understand who is being affected by the problem. Being able to collaborate with people who have diverse backgrounds is especially helpful when trying to empathize, since it means I am working with people who view the world differently from me and who are able to understand problems differently than I am. Getting rid of efforts to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in schools will discourage these people from seeking higher education, which will have an overall negative impact on society, since the next generation of engineers will not be able to empathize as effectively.

I am very thankful that I have had professors, friends, and other people in my life who have different perspectives from me. Being surrounded by people who think differently from me allows me to form complex opinions, since I'm better able to understand the beliefs, backgrounds, and needs of other people. One of the disciplines within Civil Engineering that affects everybody is transportation. The Ohio Department of Transportation states on their website that their vision is to have "a world-class transportation system that improves the lives of all Ohioans." Engineering students are not going to be able to learn to look out for the lives of all Ohioans unless they are surrounded by people from different areas, people with different backgrounds, and people with different ways of looking at and interacting with the world around them. I want to have a career where I can positively impact my community. Because of that, I hope that I can continue to have classmates who are different from me, who feel safe to be at UC, and who feel like they belong in engineering.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on Senate Bill 1 so that the next generation of engineers will be able to effectively work to meet the needs of all Ohioans. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Quentin Kelly