

Chairman, members of the committee, my name is Anne Bridget Fleischer, and I am an associate professor in the occupational therapy program at the University of Cincinnati. I stand in opposition to Senate Bill 1/ House Bill 6 because it restricts my ability to prepare students to be occupational therapists and creates unneeded additional paperwork leading to increased costs to the student, and undermines academic freedom

As an occupational therapy professor, I have an ethical responsibility to prepare my students to provide care to all individuals. DEI is not only about those who are black, white, Hispanic and/or non-Hispanic but also includes those with different abilities. These restrictions could lead to programs preparing students to be health care providers from not being accredited. There are standards we need to meet for our programs to exist in Ohio. By restricting our ability to discuss the diverse needs of those seeking health care, not only will it lead to poor patient care—impacting you and your family. This could lead to health care programs losing accreditation. Citizens of Ohio who want to pursue a health care degree will need to go to another state to receive their education.

Not only will this bill put the accreditation of health care programs at risk, it also will lead to increased costs of college tuitions because of the many unnecessary unfunded requirements, such as posting syllabi and answering questions about my course who do not have any interest in pursuing an occupational therapy degree. Not only will this put a burden on me and other professors, but it will also make it challenging to hire qualified faculty to teach within our program. If a qualified candidate has a choice to work for a university where they do not have to post their syllabi, answer the public's questions about their courses, fear being fired, design their curriculum around mandates, they will choose a position at a university without this burden.

I am requesting that you remove the requirement of posting syllabi, allow faculty to strike, eliminate the restrictions on teaching about the diverse types of people live in Ohio and throughout the United States, and support the accreditation bodies course requirements for graduation. I ask that you consider my testimony and vote no to SB#1/ HB#6.