

Testimony of Mitchell Eismont, MFA
Before the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee
Rep. Tom Young, Chair
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Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and Members of the Higher Education Committee,

My name is Mitchell Eismont, and I am a professor of Graphic Design at Central State University, where I have taught for 12 years. I do not represent Central State University but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 1.

This bill will place unnecessary administrative burdens on universities that are already struggling, such as Central State University. Implementing the mandates outlined in SB 1 will require additional taxpayer funds, as universities will have to hire more administrators to comply with these regulations. Rather than fostering institutional independence, this bill increases government oversight and reduces university autonomy.

Moreover, SB 1 will directly impact my classroom and a valuable corporate partnership between Central State University and Procter & Gamble. Over three years ago, Procter & Gamble approached our art department to address the lack of African American representation in the design industry. According to the 2019 AIGA Design Census, only 3% of designers were African American. Recognizing the need for change, Procter & Gamble initiated a DEI program to provide our students with co-op opportunities, jobs, and mentorship from industry-leading designers. This program has enriched our student body and better prepared them for careers in the field.

By prohibiting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs, SB 1 would jeopardize this partnership and others like it. Eliminating these initiatives would limit students' access to professional opportunities, negatively affecting workforce development and economic mobility for underrepresented groups. This bill does not promote fairness—it actively dismantles efforts to create equitable opportunities for all students.

Ohio's higher education system thrives when faculty, students, and administrators have the freedom to engage in open discourse, rigorous research, and shared governance. Senate Bill 1 threatens these foundational principles, replacing them with state-imposed restrictions that limit intellectual inquiry and undermine institutional independence.

I urge this committee to reject SB 1 and instead support policies that protect academic freedom, faculty rights, and institutional integrity. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mitchell Eismont". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'M' and 'E'.

Mitchell Eismont