

As someone who has benefitted from DEI initiatives as a disabled woman, I feel it is necessary for me to speak up against SB1. The bill claims to present a pathway for diversity of thought, but is it not then counter-intuitive to discontinue DEI departments and training? The “D” in DEI stands for “Diversity,” after all. Let’s delve into some of the other contradictions in this bill.

It is intentionally vague. A staffer at Cirino’s office confirmed to me on 3/6/2025 that the language in this bill could lead to the firing of professors (yes, even tenured) or the expulsion of students that are deemed to have improperly discussed “DEI” topics. But what even is DEI? It seems like republicans use it as a catch-all phrase for anyone whose presence makes them uncomfortable or who bests them in a debate.

Sec. 3345.382 of SB1 would require colleges to design an American Civics course with a provided list of required readings. Such as a least 5 articles of “The Federalist Papers.” I would like to draw the committee's attention to Hamilton’s statement in the very first article, in which he says, “The consciousness of good intentions disdains ambiguity.” I would ask that Republicans remove the ambiguity of language in this bill and stand by their words, so the public can judge just how good their intentions are.

Another required reading under this section would be “Letter from Birmingham Jail” by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. What was MLK protesting? The oppression he faced due to his race. Discussion of such topics is prohibited per Sec. 3345.88 of the same bill. This being the case, is this not just another example of SB1 being antithetical to itself?

Item “F” Under Sec. 3345.88 also seems to endorse the disbandment of graduation celebrations and alumni gatherings that celebrate different identities. Sadly, the Black Alumni Reunion was postponed at my alma mater, Ohio University, because of the anti-DEI sentiment being spread by the republican party. And more events are being outright cancelled. I am curious if students can anticipate the disbandment of fraternities and sororities? As the Greek System has policies that “segregate students along gender identity,” to borrow some phrasing from this section of the bill.

I am going to go ahead and sum up here: Republicans like Cirino don’t want diversity of voices, they want to suppress the voices of their opposition. They want to corrupt research by excluding entire swathes of the population from either participating in or actively conducting studies. I urge the Ohio House of Representatives to vote NO on SB1.