

Testimony in Opposition to Ohio Senate Bill 1

Dear Members of the Committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to voice my concern and strong opposition to Ohio Senate Bill 1. This bill poses a significant threat to advancements in equity efforts in our educational institutions and undermines the principles of academic freedom.

One of the most concerning aspects of this bill is its potential to gut advancements in equity training and scholarship programs, particularly those designed to support military veterans, individuals with physical disabilities, human trafficking survivors, women, rural student populations and other marginalized groups. The lack of a clear definition for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the bill raises serious concerns about the future of these vital programs, which play a crucial role in fostering inclusivity and support within our educational system.

Moreover, the bill seeks to ban "controversial beliefs or policies," effectively compelling colleges and universities to avoid discussions on critical issues such as climate change, equity initiatives, and accessibility. The broad language used in the bill could classify virtually any contemporary topic as "politically controversial," thereby stifling essential classroom discussions and limiting students' exposure to diverse viewpoints.

Additionally, the demand for maximum "intellectual diversity" in universities, coupled with vague requirements, poses a direct threat to academic freedom. Faculty may feel compelled to avoid certain subjects altogether, fearing repercussions for not meeting ambiguous standards. This environment not only restricts educators but also deprives students of a comprehensive and robust education.

In conclusion, I urge you to reconsider the implications of Ohio Senate Bill 1. It undermines equity initiatives, restricts vital discussions on important societal issues, and threatens the academic freedom essential for a thriving educational environment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



Monique Ross

Concerned citizen, parent, and educator

