

Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and members of the House Workforce & Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Emily Hudson. I am a social worker and a mental health counselor. I have worked with county agencies, foster kids, with injured workers, and in the emergency room of a local hospital. I have dedicated my life to helping others and building strong communities. Currently, I work at a community college where I help support students through issues in their lives and/or their academics to help them be successful, graduate, and become productive members of our communities and state. I also am an adjunct professor teaching introductory social work classes. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

College and higher education already place a high level of importance on the commitment to free and open intellectual inquiry, independence of thought, and tolerance of differing viewpoints; these lines are directly from the statement of commitment requirement. Our job is never to tell someone what to think or to change their minds. We all have the right to have our own viewpoints and opinions about topics. We treat all staff and students the same, everyone is treated as equals. These things are already happening on college campuses and in college classrooms.

However, the changes in this bill would change that. Limiting what we are able to talk about with our students is NOT open intellectual inquiry, independence of thought, or tolerance of differing viewpoints. We want everyone to share their point of view so each person can come to their own conclusion. This is the goal whether I am teaching or counseling a student, not to tell people what to think or to try to indoctrinate students.

Furthermore, the changes this would bring to higher education in Ohio would have longer lasting impacts than just on higher education. Student will choose to not go to college in Ohio and will leave the state for colleges in states with fewer restrictions. This will have devastating impacts on our state economy and our future population growth. Ohio has the opportunity to grow our economy and educate the future workers who will continue to grow manufacturing in our state. But only if we let colleges do their jobs and educate the future of Ohio.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Emily Hudson MSW, LISW-S