

Testimony of Sabrina Wicker
Before the House Higher Education Committee Representative Tom Young, *Chair*
March 11, 2025

Chair Tom Young, Vice Chair Kevin Ritter, Ranking Member Beryl Piccolantonio, and members of the Workforce and Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for granting me the opportunity to testify today. My name is Sabrina Wicker, I am a senior at Case Western Reserve University, and I am here today to oppose Senate Bill 1.

Though I, myself, attend a private institution in Northeast Ohio, I recognize the state-wide consequences that this bill could have if passed. Ohio is home to nearly 100 colleges and universities, 14 of which are public institutions that would be subject to massive changes if this bill were to be passed. This bill would impact approximately 1 out of every 5 Ohio institutions of higher education.

Senate Bill 1 bans any and all DEI programs, offices, and scholarships under public universities. **This can, and will, have dire consequences for Ohioans.** I would like to echo the words of my peers that have submitted testimony today highlighting how these DEI programs have served to personally benefit them and their education, and **I would like to add that these programs and offices employ thousands of Ohioans across the state.**

As a consequence of SB 1's passing, public universities would be forced to lay off thousands of staff, faculty, and student workers whose jobs and livelihood will be eliminated under the bill. This will harm **children** and families of employees left unemployed by SB 1 who will lose access to a major source of household income and benefits like healthcare. It will additionally impose excessive financial burden on students and families whose scholarships will be eliminated under this bill.

The recent changes in federal legislation relating to DEI, namely in research, have additionally forced universities, **including my own**, to implement hiring freezes, making it harder for those left unemployed by SB1 to re-enter the workforce in academia, regardless of their years of hard work and dedication to their fields.

The Declaration of Independence states that “**We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.**” SB 1 undermines this American value by silencing and suppressing the experiences of all Ohioans from diverse backgrounds, ranging from **our own Veterans** to the immigrants that make up a vital part of our labor force to the Black Americans whose ancestors built this nation. Educators who value Americans' rich and **diverse** history should not be threatened with losing their jobs, nor should the children and families that they provide for. That is why I, as a college student in Ohio, am urging you to **save jobs for Ohioans** and to **vote NO on SB 1.**

Thank you, I am open to any questions you may have.