

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 Kathleen Penley. I am a lifelong Ohio resident, former teacher in higher education, with a career now in the retail sector. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

Some have long forgotten the strength that comes with multiple perspectives. Having a diverse pool of information allows leaders and groups to better solve world problems. Supporting DEI leads to better work outcomes through new ideas and understanding of multicultural points of view. It also helps bring communities together. Education and understanding will thrive when more diversity is supported. Prohibiting DEI will only reduce our country's standing in the knowledge pool, and prevent our future workforces from being able to participate in the best careers.

Additionally, the worst atrocities in history are rooted in limited knowledge and "othering" of groups of people. By ignoring the past, we no longer learn from our mistakes. Eliminating DEI, and allowing a small few to put blinders on our future students is setting ourselves up for dangers no one should walk into willingly.

Be brave and stand up for the vast knowledge available to our country. Don't cower to the few who will gain the most from limiting knowledge and keeping historically underrepresented groups from participating in the conversation. Remember, DEI is about enriching EVERYONES result by allowing multiple perspectives to better the collective future.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this regressive bill. It is clearly taking a step backwards, which benefits no one.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.