

Opposition to Ohio Senate Bill 1 (SB 1)

To Whom It May Concern,

I write in strong opposition to Senate Bill 1 (SB 1), a piece of legislation that seeks to eliminate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs from Ohio's public universities under the guise of promoting "intellectual diversity." This bill is not only a step backward—it is a deliberate attempt to silence efforts to address systemic inequities in higher education.

I speak from direct experience. For over 25 years, I worked at The Ohio State University, where I saw firsthand how leadership responded to student concerns about diversity, equity, and inclusion. Rather than tackling larger institutional barriers to access and equity, they encouraged me to "massage the data" to make it appear as though our education program was less racist than it was. They refused to engage in meaningful reform, instead patting themselves on the back for meeting the bare minimum of affirmative action standards while continuing to admit a disproportionate number of white male students.

SB 1 is an extension of this same superficial approach—except now, rather than pretending to support DEI, Ohio lawmakers are trying to dismantle it entirely. The argument that these programs stifle "intellectual diversity" is a dangerous misrepresentation. DEI initiatives exist because institutions like OSU have historically excluded and marginalized entire groups of people. They provide necessary accountability and challenge the status quo in ways that institutional leadership is often unwilling to do on its own. Without these programs, there will be even fewer mechanisms to ensure that universities serve all students equitably.

I saw how difficult it was to make meaningful progress on DEI even when universities had a mandate to do so. I left my position because I could no longer be complicit in a system that prioritized appearances over real change. If SB 1 passes, it will send a clear message to students, faculty, and staff that Ohio's public institutions are not committed to fairness, inclusion, or truth.

I urge legislators to reject SB 1 and stand against efforts to erase the hard-fought progress made toward making Ohio's universities more accessible and equitable for all. The future of higher education should be one of inclusion, not exclusion.

Sincerely,

Albert T Lash
3628 Whitworth Way
Columbus OH 43228