

Testimony of Gabrielle Hardisky

Before the House Higher Education Committee

Representative Tom Young, Chair

March 11, 2025

Good Morning. Thank you Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and members of the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee for allowing me to testify. My name is Gabrielle Hardisky, and I am here to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bill 1.

I am a second-year undergraduate student at The Ohio State University. As someone who has directly relied on the policies and protections this bill seeks to destroy, I can share firsthand the catastrophic impact this bill will have on students across Ohio if enacted. During my time here at Ohio State, I was raped by another student enrolled at the university. This was a traumatic event that left me lost, scared, and hopeless. In January of this year, I attempted to take my own life. Without the support of the Office of Institutional Equity or the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, I would have never been able to seek justice. These programs have saved my life and many others. Without these programs, my rapist and so many others that have committed sexual crimes would not be held accountable for their inhumane actions. It was with the support of these programs that I was able to continue my education and find the help I needed to live my life freely despite the emotional, physical, and mental damage I experienced because of this trauma. SB1 threatens to deprive students like me of these protections that are essential for living healthily and happily. This bill aims to eliminate programs that promote the immense diversity, equity, and inclusion found in universities across the state. These programs do more than just

create and hold space for a supportive community, they provide life-saving resources for survivors, marginalized students, and those students who rely on advocacy the most. If this bill had been passed at the time of my trauma, my rapist might still be walking freely without consequence, and I would not be alive providing this testimony to you today. This bill does not protect students, it puts us in danger. Without these institutional safeguards, survivors of sexual violence will have no place to report misconduct and seek justice. It will allow sexual perpetrators and create an unsafe and dangerous environment for every student. Colleges and universities should always be places where students, regardless of their background or experiences. Students deserve the right to have access to the necessary resources required to learn and thrive in their programs. SB1 does not help students, it silences us. This bill tells survivors that their voices, their trauma, their story, and their futures do not matter. We matter, and I refuse to accept silence. I urge this committee to not accept this either.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my testimony. I ask you to take my testimony to heart and vote NO on this bill before it harms the education of Ohioans. I am happy to answer any questions you may have. You may contact me at gabyhardisky@gmail.com or (937)-286-2818.