

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 Melissa Foley, and the testimony I present today represents my personal opinions and beliefs as an individual. I am a lifelong Ohio resident, mother to a currently enrolled college student, and a first-generation student with a Bachelors of Technical and Applied Studies, Summa Cum Laude.

I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

I grew up in rural Northeast Ohio in a low income home, and I spent summers working on my family's farm. Higher education was not a priority for my family, but I was able to complete my Associate's degree thanks to the College Credit Plus program. When I had my daughter at 18 years old I had to pause my education and I began full time employment to support my family.

Thanks to programs encouraging "non-traditional" students like me who are over the age of 25, with family responsibilities, and work obligations I was able to continue my education in my 30s. Thankfully there are programs that encourage equitable schedules for working parents, considerations based on diverse students (like me from rural areas and low-income families), and support for first-generation students which made me feel included in an institution my parents had thought would not welcome me.

Listen, I was raised by honest, hard-working, Ohio residents who always tell it like it is...

- SB 1 and HB 6 are fiscally irresponsible, needlessly bureaucratic, and morally dishonest.
- Any legislation that expands unnecessary government oversight will increase bureaucracy and inefficiency. This will lead to higher administrative costs. Ohio citizens already pay enough in taxes.
- These bills undermine individual freedoms and the ability to make decisions based on personal values or beliefs. Not to mention, the bills imply parents are not able to raise their own children to think critically. Truly, the fear of being "indoctrinated" should only worry absent parents.
- Additionally, the bills harm those in need, such as individuals facing systemic hardships, healthcare challenges, or educational disadvantages. The bill creates harmful long-term effects on future generations by cultivating economic disparity for historically marginalized members of society.
- If all of that is not enough, the bills will limit funding and support for research and innovation, which will stifle scientific progress in critical areas such as medical advancements, clean energy, and technology. This will limit Ohio's ability to compete in a rapidly evolving global economy.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this irresponsible bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.