

Testimony of J.A. Carter, Ph.D.  
Before the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee  
Rep. Tom Young, Chair  
March 11, 2025

Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and Members of the Higher Education Committee:

My name is J.A. Carter, and I am a professor at the University of Cincinnati Blue Ash College. I have been teaching at the college level for 14 years, all in the state of Ohio. I do not represent the University of Cincinnati or the University of Cincinnati Blue Ash College, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to House Bill 6.

As a native Ohioan who is still a proud, dedicated Buckeye, I have significant concerns about the impact HB6 is likely to have on Ohio's economy. HB6 poses significant challenges to recruitment and retention, not just for faculty and staff but also for students and the broader workforce. Prospective students are already expressing concerns about the quality of education they may receive in a state that has banned DEI programming and restricted the ability of faculty to teach and assess knowledge from empirically based research findings on topics the state has deemed "controversial". This raises concerns about future enrollment projections, and especially the impact on lost out-of-state and international tuition revenue. Current students fear their degrees will be devalued and they will struggle to meet accreditation standards for certain fields. Students educated in an environment that restricts exposure to established facts derived from research may struggle to develop the critical thinking and analytical skills that employers seek. Without these opportunities, students may lack the ability to construct well-reasoned arguments, consider counterpoints, and apply research across disciplines, essential skills in today's workforce.

Beyond higher education, HB6 could also hinder Ohio's corporate recruitment efforts. Top talent, particularly those who prioritize inclusive work environments, may avoid seeking employment in a state that actively restricts DEI initiatives. Studies have shown that diverse workforces drive innovation, economic growth, and increased revenue. If Ohio is perceived as unwelcoming, businesses may struggle to attract the best candidates, ultimately limiting the state's economic potential. By restricting DEI, Ohio risks not only the competitiveness of its higher education institutions but also the long-term strength of its workforce and economy.

In the state's 2023 Population Projections Report, it was stated that Ohio's population is beginning what will likely be a persistent period of population loss. Research has found that population loss has significant negative impacts on an economy, reducing the workforce, tax bases and demand, and causing declines in services, infrastructure, and innovation. Passing a bill that may reduce our current population and drive away potential employees and students is contrary to addressing the challenges of population loss that the state has already identified as a concern.

Overall, this bill is bad for Ohio. It threatens our competitiveness in bringing in strong faculty and students and impedes our ability to meet the needs of the students we have. It limits our abilities as educators to prepare our students for the world they live in and the jobs they will

have in the future. It devalues the institutions of higher education in the state and the degrees we confer. Ultimately, it looks to address a manufactured problem that simply does not exist. As a faculty member, I have no ability to indoctrinate my students. If I did, I would be able to inspire them to read the syllabus. Universities are filled with some of the most highly educated people in our country. Ohio has many prestigious institutions and world-renowned faculty who already produce world-class education. Students from around the country and the world seek out what Ohio has to offer. It would be truly devastating for our academic communities if state legislation negated our ability to continue providing these sought-after services. Please vote no on House Bill 6 and protect the autonomy and reputation of universities and colleges and the quality of education for students in Ohio. My current and future students are counting on you.

Thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony on this important issue.