

Testimony of Madeline Stewart  
Before the House Higher Education Committee

Representative Tom Young, Chair

March 11, 2025

Dear Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and members of the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee,

My name is Madeline Stewart, and I am a student of environmental social sciences here in Ohio. I do not represent my university, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 1. I don't know if I am a benefactor of Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion. I am a middle-class white woman who has had the fortune of having a brain and lifestyle that was conducive to higher education in this country. However, that is the point of DEI. The point of DEI is not to provide undeserving opportunities to those who did not work to receive them. DEI is meant to search for those who would otherwise go unseen. Who, despite their stacked resume and bright mind, face barriers far outside their own control. DEI is meant to *find* the best, the brightest and the most qualified people, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or identity. When I look around at my fellow students, I cannot tell you who is a benefactor of DEI, because each and every one of them is *qualified* and *deserving* to be there. That is what DEI does. It fights to create an inclusive environment, that is equal to all and is diverse in both people and perspective. DEI fights to be what the people of the United States have always been fighting to be – equal. You cannot dismantle DEI without having to first come to terms that you are opposing this most basic fundamental part of the United States constitution, this right for equality.