

Opponent Testimony for Senate Bill 1/ House Bill 6
House Workforce and Higher Education Committee
March 9, 2025
Megan Duffy-Johnson, MLIS

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 Megan Duffy-Johnson and I am a graduate of The Ohio State University. I also hold a Master's degree in Library and Information Science from the University of Pittsburgh. I currently reside in Grandview Heights, Ohio, where my husband and I are raising our elementary-aged daughters. I teach at a preschool in my community, was raised by public school teachers, and am very committed to high educational standards from early childhood through higher education. I oppose Senate Bill 1/House Bill 6 because I believe that it will restrict students from receiving a comprehensive and factual education. Furthermore, the ban on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion puts students at risk of being denied the extra context and educational support needed for them to become successful learners and citizens in our world.

Throughout my life I have been taught to approach new information with critical thinking skills, especially as a student at Chaminade Julianne Catholic High School in Dayton, and at The Ohio State University. I have been taught that while some subjects may be open to interpretation and belief (religion, philosophy, etc.), other subjects are rooted in undeniable facts (math, science, history, etc.). The language in SB 1/HB 6 that defines controversial beliefs as "any belief or policy that is the subject of political controversy, including issues such as climate policies, electoral politics, foreign policy, diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, immigration policy, marriage, or abortion," calls into question the ability of educators to properly teach subjects that are proven truths. How can students grasp the scientifically proven facts of climate science and make sense of the policies governing it if instructors are not allowed to teach it? The same can be said for nearly any historical situation, including the Holocaust, slavery and the American Civil War, and the Civil Rights movement. Knowledge of these events is fundamental in our world, both as accurate records of the past, but also as conduits for discussions that lead to empathy and caring for our fellow humans.

I fear that the language of this bill around "controversial topics," as well as the ban of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion programs will allow for a very one-sided educational system that will not prepare students to be thoughtful, knowledgeable, and compassionate to their peers and fellow humans. The passage of this bill would put constraints on the types of critical thinking discussions that lead to broader solutions to the problems impacting our local, state, and federal issues. Without this strong foundation, graduates entering the workforce will not be equipped to relate to others, or have meaningful discourse when difficulties arise.

In conclusion, I am a parent and a citizen very committed to high quality education. I feel that SB1/HB6 will restrict students from receiving the comprehensive and factual education that they need to be informed and productive citizens of our country. I ask that you please consider my testimony and vote no on SB1/HB6. Thank you.