

Ohio House Workforce and Higher Education Committee
Opposing Written Testimony for SB1
March 9, 2025

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Amanda Fontana. I am a mother of 3 children, one of which is a college student himself, a senior at Bowling Green State University. I am a graduate of Stark State College, the University of Akron, and Cleveland State University. I have a Master of Social Work degree and am an adjunct Professor at Stark State College in the Human and Social Service program. I am submitting testimony as an individual, and I strongly oppose SB 1 and its companion bill, HB 6.

My journey started as a high school drop out and teen mom to a daughter who has severe disabilities. Needless to say, our lives included many professionals from medical specialists, therapists, to social workers. We counted on the expertise of these professionals for my daughter's physical health and for access to resources in our community. Their education and expertise on the diverse lives and services and supports for children with disabilities would provide my daughter opportunities to allow her to not only participate in our society but to also be included. If it were not for the expertise and education of workers in these fields, my family would be living in extreme poverty or worse.

These life experiences are what motivated me to obtain my GED, and attend college. Doing so with assistance from programs that help low-income, first-generation college students. The same programs that this bill would eliminate. Because of my hard work, determination, and these programs, I went from a high school dropout to a college professor in 12 years. In addition, the education and expertise I obtained allow me to help others in the ways I was helped to promote and advance Ohio communities. I serve on multiple boards and committees, which include Tuscarawas County Friends of the Homeless, Tuscarawas County Board of Developmental Disabilities Human Rights Committee, and I was recently elected to the New Philadelphia City Schools Board of Education. My college professors taught me the content and skills necessary to meet the state required competencies to become a competent social worker, I now teach those skills to future social workers.

SB1 would restrict the necessary areas of education and knowledge for Ohio social workers to be competent in the field. Not only is this disingenuous, but it is also dangerous to allow an opinion to carry as much weight as research-based evidence when it comes to the lives of real people who fall under the umbrella terms of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this dangerous bill.

Respectfully,

Amanda Fontana