

Testimony of Anca Matyiku, Ph.D.

Before the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee  
Rep. Tom Young, Chair  
March 10, 2025

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Anca Matyiku, Ph.D. I am Assistant Professor in the School of Architecture and Interior Design at the University of Cincinnati. I am not representing the University of Cincinnati, but I am submitting testimony as a private citizen. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

Starting with the **provisions regarding DEI**, in the immediate future they are poised to remove essential financial assistance for thousands of young learners and future leaders. In the bigger picture, these provisions undermine the experience of all faculty and students who are not white, male, able bodied, etc. who already have to navigate inherited or generational trauma. These provisions are an attack of the academic community's capacity to perform its responsibility to the humanities, to empathy, and to basic human dignity. The academic context is the very place where our students and colleagues should feel safe and it is the place where one should be able to nurture a kinder, more generous future world that does not call into question basic human freedoms. A world in which more than half of the population is expending their energy towards fighting for their humanity is a world that stunts not only overall well-being but also trickles down into stunted economic growth.

**The danger of this is a steady progression towards monoculture, which not only reproduces without cross-pollination but depletes the very soil of the island it has colonized for its own onastic solipsism, towards a steady and certain collapse.**

The provisions **regarding "intellectual diversity"** are self-contradictory. They essentially state that one must cultivate "intellectual diversity" so long as they do not fall under the rubric of "controversial beliefs or policies." These, along with many other provisional policies are an attack on freedom of speech and intellectual freedom and are aimed at nothing short of policing higher education. Putting these restrictions on the intellectual life of institutions of higher learning into law, is a **resounding mistrust towards the very organism that is meant to cultivate and safeguard critical thinking and engaged citizenship.**

Intellectual life, which is in essence a critical and elastic imagination, is like a complex multi-layered muscle. When prevented from moving, or when forced to only move a certain way, even simple muscles become atrophied and collapse. **Stated differently, when the freedom of intellectual life is confined to only reproduce what is enforced and expected, it loses its agility to face the unexpected.**

**To straitjacket and put under surveillance the intellectual life of institutions of higher learning is an attack on the very survival mechanism of a society.**

The University of Cincinnati has already lost good candidates because of the threat of this proposed legislation. **If passed, Ohio is well poised towards a future of brain drain. Talent will go elsewhere, the education of our future generations will suffer, social infrastructure will suffer, the economy will suffer.**

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

Anca Matyiku, Ph.D.