

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Jessica Kraft. I am a single mom with two college degrees and have lived in Ohio my whole life. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

Getting rid of diversity conversations gets rid of creativity and connections. Some of the most interesting conversations I've ever had are learning about how other people have lived their lives. Learning empathy and understanding others perspectives and reasoning helps build critical thinking skills that I believe are even more important today than it ever has been before. I have a son who's growing up in a world where AI and computers are making school work seem obsolete or pointless. Children need to have connections with people, with those who don't look and act like them in order to learn about the world and not be siloed and tunnel visioned into thinking only one way is correct. In order for the country to grow and and keep up with the rest of the world, we cannot go backwards. I cannot stress how incredibly unpopular this opinion is with younger generations. Teaching people to hate is not the way the country or this state improves. I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this extremist bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.