

Testimony of Elise Bergeron
Before the House Higher Education Committee
March 10, 2025

Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and members of the Ohio House Higher Education Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide written testimony against SB1.

My name is Elise. I am a student at the University of Cincinnati, majoring in Environmental Studies and minoring in Anthropology. I am a lifelong resident of Cincinnati, and attended a Cincinnati Public School throughout highschool. I am strongly opposed to SB1.

For my first year of college, I attended a small liberal arts school in Kentucky. I decided to transfer after my freshman year, as I believed a larger university would be a better fit for me and grant me more opportunities. It is a decision I am glad I made- I transferred to the University of Cincinnati, and I have become very involved on campus, both in my classes and in extracurriculars. UC has become a home and a welcoming community for me.

Part of what makes UC so great is its diversity, both in terms of the people, and also because of all the opportunities and classes it offers. SB1 would restrict that. It would diminish the quality of our education, and censor many voices in our community. If SB1 is enacted, it will have devastating effects on the status of Ohio's higher education, followed by economic losses. Prospective students will turn away from Ohio schools, because of the downturn of quality, the censorship of education, and because they would not find the communities as welcoming.

I love UC, and I think transferring here was one of the most important decisions I've made. However, if SB1 had been enacted when I was considering transferring, I would have stayed at the college in Kentucky. I would not want to attend a university in a state where stripping campuses of resources based on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is the norm. Many incoming college students feel the same. If SB1 is passed, we will see a loss of students, professors, and value and economic profits of Ohio's higher education.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I strongly urge you to vote NO on this bill before it harms the education of Ohioans.