

Testimony of Michelle Stanley

Before the House Higher Education Committee

Representative Tom Young, Chair

March 11, 2025

Good Morning. Thank you Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and members of the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee for allowing me to testify today. My name is Michelle Stanley, and I am here to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bill 1.

I am a student leader at Kent State University, a college known for its historic fight for peace and reparations. A place that refused to remain stagnant in the journey to progress, but still here I am begging to be heard. You may know of May 4th 1970, a revolution of young people deciding war was unnecessary, barbaric even, but you may not know that Black history month was founded at my university.

A critical time of year that under this bill is racist because it promotes equity. Hilarious, but peculiar that people that claim to be public servants rationalize equity, “the quality of being fair and impartial”, to racism, “prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism by an individual, community, or institution against a person or people on the basis of their membership in a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized.” But this is America where people reject humanity. My question is how can mothers, fathers, community members, and public servants rationalize this bill?

In what way is excluding equity and “diverse topics”, factual events, racism or discrimination. Do you not want people under this current democracy to have a fighting chance if you vote yes, you absolutely do. Being a marginalized person is one of the hardest things to be in a world that only accepts white privilege. That's why we talk about the past like Slavery, civil rights, Stone wall, the black panther party, and so many more factual occurrences in American history.

We do not discuss these deeply important topics because we like to hear the genocide of people due to physical appearance or sexual identity, but because we want to move closer to peace, good people, want to create a world that does not repeat heinous crimes. Removing the truth, removing shame, removing political stances, and removing diverse spaces, will remove safety.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my testimony today. I ask you to take my testimony to heart, remember what it is to be a public servant and vote NO on this bill before it harms the education of Ohioans. I am happy to take any questions you may have.