

Skye D. VanGundy

Constituent from Lancaster, Ohio

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

Thank you for considering my testimony. My name is Skye VanGundy and I have been an Ohio resident all my life. I recently graduated from Ohio University with a Bachelor of Social Work. I aim to use my education to benefit the citizens in my local community and uplift the state of Ohio as a whole. I am in strong opposition of SB 1 and ask you to vote NO.

As a senior in the social work program last year, I interned at a child advocacy center. In my time spent there, I worked with children and families from many different backgrounds with all different lived experiences during a time of crisis in their lives. At a job like that, there is no avoiding difficult or uncomfortable conversations; they all are. This is why appropriate education is essential to ensure the best care for victims and their families.

SB 1 threatens to weaken the education of all future Ohio social workers through its proposed prohibition of training related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, immigration, abortion, and other subjects it deems a "controversial belief or policy". These topics are essential to the social work profession as a whole, and they were essential at my job working with abuse and assault victims.

Without proper education on topics like these, future social workers will not be adequately prepared for difficult situations that require tact, sensitivity, and a diverse range of knowledge. The real people we work with as social workers do not come censored, so the materials we are given to learn about their experiences cannot be either.

If this bill is passed, not only will it threaten the overall quality and scope of Ohio social work programs, but it will also jeopardize the accreditation of these programs by the

Higher Learning Commission. Without education on diversity, equity, and inclusion, programs will be in violation of the National Association of Social Workers' code of ethics. Accreditation enforces a higher standard of learning, allows for more program funding, and provides more job opportunities for program graduates. Without accreditation, all Ohio social work programs and their students will suffer.

This bill proposes censorship upon adult education and will be damaging not only to students, but to the people students will be serving within their communities.

Thank you for allowing my voice to be heard. I ask you to consider my testimony and I beg you to vote NO on SB 1 for the sake of all Ohio social work students, social workers, and their clients.

