

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Skye Hamilton. I am a sophomore student at Otterbein University. I am a quadruple major in English, Criminology/Justice Studies, Sociology, and Political Science, with a minor in Legal Studies/Pre-Law. I am Secretary of Otterbein University's Student Government. And I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

If this bill passes and if it gets signed into law, none of my majors would be able to be taught in full at a public institution in the state of Ohio. English requires students to read and study diverse texts. Shakespeare is great, but in order for students to have a rounded education, they have to read contemporary and experimental works from a variety of perspectives. And even Introduction to Sociology would have to be fundamentally different, because students learn about systemic racism and other structural inequalities that exist. OSU has 350+ Sociological students and 650+ Criminology students ([Explore Sociology and Criminology](#)). All of these students would be affected, and this could lead to them leaving the state, switching schools, or discontinuing their education. When people decide to go to college, they are making a decision to further their education. By not allowing them to learn from diverse perspectives that acknowledge the ways different people have been disadvantaged and privileged in our history, you are directly intervening and preventing them from bettering themselves and pursuing a proper education.

When I first started learning about structural inequalities and America's history of racism, I felt guilty. I felt bad for something that I played no intentional part in, and I didn't want to feel that way. But, once I grew up a little bit and looked outside of myself, I realized the truth: learning these things is not meant to make white people feel bad. The point is not our guilt. It is not to blame us. It is so we can make efforts to do better than America's history, and to support these people who have been disadvantaged by powers extremely outside of their control. I understand what it feels like to want to turn away because the truth is too much and it makes you uncomfortable. But you can't stop there. You can't just follow your instincts and shut it down and let these people's voices go unheard. We need to do our part to lift up the voices of minorities and provide them support. And that starts by allowing people to learn what they want to learn. People who would like not to learn about systemic racism and diversity and equity and inclusion do not have to. They can just take other classes, find homes in different groups. But don't take away this education and these resources and these topics from people who would like to know more. Intellectual diversity is vital to higher education, and this bill only sets us further back in history and undoes decades and centuries of progress. Please give others the freedom to learn and vote no on this destructive bill.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this destructive bill. Thank you for allowing me to submit my testimony.