

March 10, 2025

Dear Members of the Ohio House Workforce and Higher Education Committee,

I write to you today not only as a constituent but as a social worker and educator who has dedicated my life to serving the people of Ohio. With the potential passage of Senate Bill 1, however, I feel like a stranger in my own home. **This bill threatens not only the integrity of our higher education system but the very soul of Ohio itself.** I am here to implore you: **do not move forward with companion bills SB 1 and HB 6.**

I understand that you may believe you are representing your constituents by supporting these bills. But **I am one of those constituents, and I am pleading with you to reconsider.** We may hold different political beliefs, but does that mean my voice—and the voices of so many others—no longer deserve to be heard? **You were elected to represent all Ohioans, not just those who share your ideology.** Yet, many of us feel ignored, disregarded, and even harmed by the decisions being made. If SB 1 and HB 6 passes, **it will inflict lasting damage—not just on social workers, not just on students, but on generations to come.**

As a social worker and educator, I have seen firsthand the importance of a **comprehensive education that prepares students to work with diverse populations.** A significant component of social work is being empathetic and **understanding people—their history, their struggles, their identities.** Our work requires us to acknowledge and address systemic inequities that impact Black Americans, immigrants (both documented and undocumented), LGBTQIA+ individuals, the elderly, people with disabilities, and countless others. By restricting education on these crucial topics, **SB 1 and HB 6 will ensure that future social workers are underprepared, uninformed, and ill-equipped to help Ohioans in need.** It will not only diminish the quality of our profession but will ultimately harm the very citizens we are trained to assist—including *you, your children, your parents, or someone you love.*

Social workers do some of the hardest jobs in this country for little pay and even less recognition. **Every day, we work tirelessly to make our society more compassionate, more hospitable, and more just.** Yet, despite our commitment, **SB 1 and HB 6 threatens the very foundation of our profession.** *How can we effectively do our jobs if we are not allowed to learn about the realities of the people we serve?*

Ohio has long been a leader in social work education, with one of the largest and most respected social work workforces in the nation. But if **SB 1 and HB 6 passes, what will happen to our field?** Who will choose to study social work in Ohio if our programs cannot meet accreditation standards? **Other states that have passed similar anti-DEI laws—such as Florida, Texas, and Alabama—have at least included exemptions for accreditation requirements.** But these bills do not even offer that protection. **Are you willing to gamble with the future of Ohio's social work workforce?**

SB 1 and its companion bill, HB 6, claim to "enhance" higher education, but **they do the opposite.** By deeming certain topics as "controversial" and restricting how they can be taught,

SB 1 and HB 6 will water down the integrity of our programs, deter students from coming to Ohio, and ultimately weaken the very workforce our communities depend on.

When you **silence discussions** on race, gender, and identity, **you are not protecting students—you are depriving them of knowledge and critical thinking skills.** SB 1 and HB 6 are **not** an enhancement to higher education—they are **an attack on it.** If passed, these bills will **strip Ohio's students of a well-rounded, comprehensive education** and weaken our ability to serve our communities effectively.

I recognize that we may have different political beliefs, but **this is not about politics—this is about the future of Ohio's education, workforce, and communities.** I am urging you: **Do not pass these bills. Do not erase the voices and histories of so many people. Do not make it harder for social workers to serve and support Ohioans. Do not weaken our education system in the name of political gain.**

At the very least, **I implore you to include exemptions for accreditation standards,** as SB 83 did last year and as other states have done. But more than that, **I urge you to stand up for academic freedom, for education, and for the integrity of our profession. Vote NO on SB 1 and HB 6.**

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope you will listen to the voices of your constituents and act in the best interest of *all* Ohioans.

Sincerely,

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