

Testimony of Rayna Kanjo

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 considering my written testimony. My name is Rayna Kanjo, and I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bill 1.

Passing Senate Bill 1 will result in the elimination of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion programs and initiatives at public Ohio universities. One of the reasons I chose to state in Ohio for college and attend The Ohio State University was because of the reputation the school had for having a space for everyone. My high school was not very diverse and I dealt with racism and racial discrimination very often, making it difficult to perform to my full potential. I was excited to come to The Ohio State University because I knew I could find my home. Once arriving at the university, I found my home within the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, otherwise known as ODI, and the multitude of programs and resources it has to offer. I went from struggling in high school to find a community to accept me, to coming to college and finding a home away from home. Passing Senate Bill 1 not only takes away my home, but the home of many students who would otherwise might not obtain a college experience without it. Diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives and programs offered at Ohio universities only enhance the school and expand its reach to students who continue to uphold and perpetuate the elite reputation Ohio schools like The Ohio State University have today. Passing this bill ruins that reputation.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony today. I ask you to take my testimony to heart and vote NO on this bill before it harms the education of Ohioans. I am happy to take any questions you may have.