

Ohio House Workforce and Higher Education Committee

March 11th, 2025

Testimony in Opposition to Adoption of SB 1

Dear Members of the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee,

My name is Kayanaat Chaudhry, and I come to you as a proud Pakistani student at The Ohio State University. I have lived in Ohio for almost sixteen years after moving from Denver, Colorado, and I am incredibly ashamed, disgusted, and disappointed by the bills and actions being taken by the people in the Ohio Statehouse. Time and time again, I am here voicing my story in order to somehow persuade a group of representatives that my voice matters and that my story matters. Time and time again, you all have continued to ignore me and by extension all of your constituents who vehemently disagree with your actions. In this regard, you should all be ashamed. By ignoring the students, faculty, and Ohio residents impacted by this bill, you are only serving your own racist, capitalistic, and exploitative interests. You do not represent us in the slightest.

Senate Bill 1 is not only an attack on programs associated with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion within our higher education institutions, it is a violent attack on all Black, Indigenous, and people of color. It is a violent attack on all of the LGBTQ+ communities. It is a violent attack on disabled communities. And it is a violent attack on all minorities through its aims to break the foundations of our educations, our future careers, and our identities through systems upheld by white supremacy.

This bill serves as the greenlight for higher education institutions to systemically erase their minority students from their research, studies, and campus community. Who would feel safe and appreciated in a university that is actively working towards the erasure of their existence as students? Ted Carter, the president of The Ohio State University, my school, has already taken it upon himself to “sunset” the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, discontinue the services provided by the Student Life’s Center for Belonging and Social Change, and change the Office of Institutional Equity into the Office of Civil Rights Compliance. The Ohio State University is actively working towards moving back into functioning as a University upheld by the pillars of white supremacy and institutionalized segregation. By removing students from their research, discontinuing incoming scholarships, and halting services important to minority students, Ted Carter and the Ohio State University are effectively dismantling the purpose of higher education, which is to gain knowledge from diversity of thoughts and research, and twisting it into a weapon of facism. By suppressing our voices, our ability to be educated, and our identities on campus, The Ohio State University has become a surveillance state and dictatorship. The existence of Senate Bill 1 was the greenlight in giving our higher education institutions the ability to proactively move towards their conservative and white supremacist goals and

structures. Because of this, you are all complicit in allowing this to happen in our universities and you will continue to be complicit in systems of oppression if you do not actively listen to your constituents today and vote no on Senate Bill 1.

However, even if you decide to be complicit in the erasure of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in our higher education institutions and vote to pass this bill, you will never silence us. We come from peoples who have fought off and continue to fight off colonization, imperialism, and oppression. We come from peoples who refuse to integrate into structures of white supremacy. And we come from peoples who are incredibly steadfast. You will not silence us. You will not erase us. You will not stop us. We are the people and we hold the power to liberate our futures from the shackles of fascist laws and systems of oppression. We are powerful, we are loud, and we are not going anywhere.