

Testimony of Donald J. Trischler, MDes.
Before the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee
Rep. Tom Young, Chair
March 11, 2025

Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and Members of the Higher Education Committee:

My name is D.J. Trischler, and I am a professor of Communication Design at The University of Cincinnati, where I have taught since 2017. I do not represent The University of Cincinnati, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen opposing SB #1.

My role as a teacher involves looking at topics with my students from multiple perspectives, even those I don't always lean toward. For instance, I teach my students that there are several pathways for practicing design, including commercial and socially responsible practice. This bill limits what I can share about socially responsible practices with my students because of their relation to climate change, poverty, or inclusive approaches to design practice. Jobs exist within this realm of practice — many of my students desire careers in this pathway — and I want my students to know they have those options.

Furthermore, as a recent graduate student, I took classes investigating topics from multiple perspectives, even those different from my existing understanding or comfort zone. Never was I forced to believe something or share in ways counter to my beliefs or worldview. Instead, professors invited me into a process where I could reach my own conclusions. When evaluated, my professors looked at my ability to communicate my ideas rather than if my worldview aligned with theirs.

Likewise, I have benefited from the resources our Office of Inclusive Excellence provides to my college. These resources enable me to better serve students from different social contexts and with different abilities. They've also given me resources on handling conflict and tools to walk through the tenure process. Whenever I see our Office of Inclusive Excellence representative, they ask me if they can do anything for me. Mind you, I'm a straight white man. This office does not exist to indoctrinate my colleagues and me; instead, it exists to foster a culture where my students, colleagues, and I can flourish.

There are many reasons to find these bills troubling. I highlight the examples above because they show how it stifles the education process. Look, I know there's room for improvement in higher education. I work tirelessly with my colleagues daily to improve our processes and offerings. I became a teacher for the same reason I imagine others sought this path: numerous teachers before me helped me expand my perspective on the world and live more fully, generously, and kindly toward my neighbors. My goal is to pay that forward. These bills do not help the cause.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

D.J. Trischler