

Testimony of Audrey Wingerter  
Before the House Workforce & Higher Education Committee  
Representative Tom Young, Chair  
March 10th, 2025

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Audrey Wingerter, I am a proud graduate of Worthington Schools, a future teacher, and a Lay member of the United Methodist Church. I strongly oppose SB 1 and its companion bill, HB 6.

The person I am today was shaped by my journey through public school. At school, I had the opportunity to engage with students who had both similar and wildly different life experiences. When I was in first grade, there was another student named Audrey in my class. I was Audrey W and she was Audrey M. Whenever we would arrive at school at the same time we would shout to each other: “Hi, Audrey!”, “Hi, Audrey!”, “It’s like talking to a mirror!”. For us it was, we were essentially the same person because we had the same name. But to others, we weren’t because she is Black, and I am White. Where we saw similarities, others saw differences. Growing up in a place that celebrated those differences gave me the gift of seeing all people as beautiful and sacred.

From that, I was drawn to education, I am halfway through courses to become a high school social studies teacher. Diversity is never something to be feared, both in current times and throughout history. We must ensure that all students are taught about all people thoughtfully and thoroughly. Every moment in history is the story of someone, a story of perseverance, innovation, pain, joy, and countless other elements of the human experience. We cannot in good conscience allow those stories to fade. What we experience today is built on the events of yesterday. We cannot continue to build if we do not know the foundation that we stand on.

I am also opposed to this bill as a Christian. We are called to love all people and uplift all unique experiences, identities, passions, and beliefs. Celebrating diversity does not threaten that, it upholds it. When we come together to learn and teach about our shared histories and the ramifications of it we can grow in understanding and make an attempt to do better. Especially in this Lenten season; we must love our neighbor, we must hear the cries of the needy, and we must open our hearts to joyous, holy love that knows no bounds. I hope that if you share my beliefs, you will affirm them in the decision to care for all of creation; past, present, and future.

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

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.