

**Opponent Testimony for SB 1 – Written-Only**  
**House Workforce and Higher Education Committee**

**March 11, 2025**

**Nicholas R. Herold**

**Constituent from Lancaster, Ohio**

Thank you for considering my testimony. My name is Nicholas Herold, and I am a lifelong resident of Lancaster, Ohio. I am currently a social work student at Ohio University and am employed through Fairfield County 211 and the 988 Lifeline as a crisis counselor. As I am a current social work student, **I VERY strongly oppose SB 1 and beg you to vote NO.**

I have spent the better half of a decade working towards my degree at Ohio University and analyzing the values of social work. Additionally, as a crisis counselor through the 988 Lifeline, I counsel an extremely diverse demographic of clients, ranging from upper class suburban Fairfield County residents to the homeless population. On the side of information and referral, I support clients' prosperity and sustain their dignity and worth in supplying a wide variety of referrals and resources. These clients too are intrinsically diverse in nature as we operate under a charge-free nonprofit model covering each and every resident of Fairfield County. As an opponent of SB 1, I fear for the suffocating viewpoints found in the language of the bill that has the ability to stifle the education for students across various degrees and certifications, taking away the credibility of Ohio's educational programs. For example, the limitation on education

concerning diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, immigration policy, marriage, etc. has the unfortunate potential to violate the National Association of Social Work's (NASW) code of ethics. This bill has the ability to limit Ohio social workers' scope of practice, accreditation, and (again) the credibility of the profession on a national level. Without proper training on these "controversial beliefs or policies" many clients of mine would frankly be dead. Because of education on diversity, equity, and inclusion, I, along with my coworkers/peers, have managed to best serve Ohio residents in their most vulnerable states of life. This focus on education about cultural sensitivity has been an enormous strength in building rapport and trust between us and our clients, allowing us to motivate all Ohio residents in surviving another day. Bills written with the language used in SB 1 promise inadequacy in first responders' ability to operate on the level of proficiency expected out of Ohio workers.

As a future Master of Social Work (MSW) student, I expect an exodus of students across various social-service educations and professions out of the state of Ohio in the wake of bills such as SB 1. I have already begun to establish plans for out of state education if this bill were to pass, in tandem with my peers out of fear of inadequate education that may be deemed a **joke** to the rest of the United States. I believe, as adults, college/university students have the right of choice regarding their education. Education of any kind that limits diverse viewpoints of this nature discourages higher education and directly negates Ohio's longstanding promise of choice in learning paths best suited for each individual.

For the sake of Ohio's current/future students, professionals, job seekers, and residents, it is vital that this bill is prevented from passing. The outcome will not only be detrimental for Ohio's renowned educational standards, but also for the quality of life for all Ohio residents. Diverse topics and discourse deserve to be heard in classes for those pursuing higher education, regardless of controversy. Censorship on this level will harm the prosperity of Ohio students and their education. Thank you for considering my opposition to this bill. I ask you to please consider my testimony and **vote NO on this bill.**

Nicholas R. Herold