

Testimony of Nica Delgado

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 allowing me to testify today. My name is Nica Delgado, and I am here today to condemn this legislation, and to urge you to vote NO Senate Bill 1.

I am a Cultural Anthropology major at Rep. Workman's Alma mater, Kent State University, and the Vice President of our Ohio Student Association chapter. I am the eldest of four children, and I spent my high school career caretaking for my disabled sister. My mother has been an educator for 12 years, and my family served in the United States Air Force for over 50 years prior to myself. I am the granddaughter of immigrants on both sides of my family, and I am proud to carry on my Abuelo's legacy of being a highly educated Mexican-American. My worldview has been shaped by my time living on Wright Patterson Air Force Base, and it has built my passion for protecting every Ohioan's access to education. As a Catholic, I believe God's plan for me is one of service, and opposing Senate Bill 1 is to my interpretation the greatest act of service I can do for my loved ones today— and I do love the people of Ohio.

I may have trouble convincing the rest of the committee, but Rep. Workman, I urge you to vote no, and hope to convince you to under the idea that flashes take care of flashes— or you will lose the votes of every student you have harmed by voting “yes” in the next election.

I've been fortunate to learn from anthropology professors with incredible talents in research and education. If SB1 passes, my professors will be forced to allow students to remain ignorant about facts in our field, since they would be required to be neutral on “controversial concepts” such as climate policies, electoral politics, foreign policy, immigration policy, marriage, and abortion— all of which I have researched as an anthropology student. What will I do when I lose out on valuable class time because my professors cannot teach the true history of racism, eugenics, and phrenology? These are not topics that can be taught neutrally, considering their association with Nazi ideology. I know that, if you were at Kent again, that you would not want to receive a degree from an institution that would require your instructors to remain neutral.

Kent State University should not be an institution that allows students to be uneducated about the science of the holocaust.

I am lucky to have the opportunity to pursue higher education without taking on student loan debt. My scholarships nearly cover my tuition as a student living off campus, but in order to keep the lights on in my apartment and stay healthy, I have to work as a tour guide, a library assistant, a museum assistant, and as a digital organizer, on top of taking 15 credit hours each semester. One of the scholarships I receive is the Oscar Ritchie Memorial Scholarship, and without it, I would not be able to attend Kent State. Rep. Workman, why would you vote yes on a bill that will kill all of our scholarships for our students like myself? Our women? Our veterans? This is particularly concerning as you refer to yourself as a former nurse, and a vote for SB1 would take away the ability for more future nurses to come to Kent State— unless, you are particularly against white, female nurses, as they would benefit the most from DEI-based scholarships.

Representatives, many have spoken before me, and many will speak after, but I ask you to take my testimony to heart and vote NO on this bill before it destroys higher education in Ohio. Thank you again for the opportunity to speak today. I am happy to take any questions you may have.