

Testimony of Ilsa Miller

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 Ilsa Miller, and I am here to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bill 1.

I am just now finishing my bachelor's of science in biochemistry and am eagerly awaiting the start of my doctoral program this coming Fall. What I am deeply concerned with is how incapacitated the educational landscape in Ohio will be if SB1 is allowed to pass. Through my time in the sciences, I have had the blessing of meeting so many individuals from all over the world and from all walks of life. Through this, through the diversity of our backgrounds, we have been able to find new and better ways to approach the problems we are faced with during our research. Through DEI funding and support programs at our universities, we are able to ensure that underprivileged and underrepresented students not only feel safe but welcomed by supporting unique needs that come with having a minority identity.

Right now, there seems to be a lot of dialogue around how higher education limits the diversity of thought, only pushing a "certain type" of thinking, and I am writing today to say that is further from the truth. I cannot say no professor ever has pushed their own agenda, but that it is not solely an offence of one ideological leaning. In my courses of study, we are always encouraged to look for reputable facts and to think critically about the information available to

us, then from there, formulate our own conclusions. And having read the language of this bill and having heard some of the concerns surrounding positions for and against this bill, I can say that I am very concerned about what may happen to not only Ohioans, should this bill pass, but for every single individual who will see the ramifications of this bill.

Students who have not been given opportunities that their more privileged counterparts have had may decide to look elsewhere for their higher education pursuits. International students may skip over applying to universities in Ohio, a great tragedy that will severely limit the perspectives and knowledge within this state's higher educational sphere. And this bill, designed to remove all facets of diversity, equity, and inclusion, will not only harm those who very frequently are the most vulnerable within these spaces. Students who may never have given a lick of attention to DEI or any programs affiliated to it will feel an impact should this bill pass. The exposure to other ways of thinking, which this bill seemingly seeks to promote through "intellectual diversity" will essentially be kneecapped, for I truly believe it is impossible to promote true intellectual freedom and independence without ensuring each and every individual involved has the resources they need to pursue such intellectual pursuits.

Thank you for your time and attention to my testimony today. I implore you to take my words to heart and vote NO on this bill before it can further cause harm to Ohioans and our education.