

Hello and thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify in opposition of Senate Bill 1, which will severely damage higher education in Ohio and cause a dramatic “brain drain” and loss of revenue and resources for this state at a time when they are desperately needed.

I would love to appeal to your better angels and ask that you understand how vital diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility are providing the highest quality of higher education. I have a bachelor’s degree focusing on diversity topics from The Ohio State University and still reside in central Ohio. I will have to relocate if I hope to pursue graduate school because my course of study will be eliminated from Ohio colleges if this bill passes, and some schools have already complied in advance. Personally, this bill is devastating as I do not currently have the financial means to move out of state and most likely will not be able to save up for such a relocation. I could now make an intense personal appeal for my own right to pursue my higher education goals and enrich students with lessons in diversity and inclusion, but I have been coming to this Statehouse for over two and a half years now and I know this plea will fall on ears committed to not considering the feelings and needs of people like me who do not fall under the conservative umbrella and instead study and hope to teach so called “woke” topics.

Instead, I am now going to appeal to the desperate needs of ALL Ohioans that Senate Bill 1 ruthlessly ignores. I’ve heard many times in this building about the crises of mental health and substance abuse and children struggling in schools. If you truly care about any or all of these issues, you need to understand that Senate Bill 1 is only going to worsen these situations. This bill will not only drive away talented professors and researchers currently working on these issues because they do not wish to provide lower quality education on these topics to students, but it will leave Ohio lacking in future workers in the areas of K-12 education, social work, mental health, and medical practitioners and researchers at all levels.

Senate Bill 1 will make students at Ohio colleges unable to meet the standards and criteria set by national boards that certify medical, mental health, and social work students for future employment. The national boards are not ethically willing or able to dumb down their standards and allow students in states that reject important education benchmarks in diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. This means that current students wishing to follow these career paths will have to leave Ohio and seek education elsewhere to qualify for licensure and future students will avoid schools in this state altogether. There are rules requiring a certain amount of coursework to be taken at the same higher learning facility, and so there would be no reason for students to consider schools in Ohio. And thus college professors would not want to stay no matter how much they may like living and teaching here, which many have until the political climate here soured toward honest, inclusive education.

I sat in the Senate hearing for SB1 and heard the people putting this bill forward loudly proclaim how much they want Ohio to be providing the best, highest quality education for students as a matter of kids “getting what they pay for.” But if this bill passes students in areas such as social work, mental health, medicine, research, and education will be receiving degrees that will not lead to licensure. By definition, Ohio will only be offering substandard higher education at the same high prices that drive young people into debt pursuing jobs for the public good. Our communities need more high-quality workers in these fields to stay here in Ohio and provide these much-needed services and resources and Senate Bill 1 will force them to leave or not come here in the first place.

This bill will hurt everyone in Ohio deeply, not just lefty weirdos like me who hope to build a better world through educating young people about the strength that can be found in celebrating and understanding

our differences. People of all political stripes need and deserve the best medical care, health care, substance abuse care, and education possible and so I implore you to keep providers of those services here in Ohio by voting no on Senate Bill 1.