

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

My name is Ashley Reynolds, a Social Justice major at Miami and an organizer in the Ohio Student Association, and I am testifying as a private citizen in opposition of Senate Bill 1.

Senate Bill 83, now Senate Bill 1, has been in the Ohio Statehouse for over two years. For over two years, students, professors, unions, and legislators on both sides of the aisle fought to keep this bill from passing. Whether we fight to protect DEI, to save our freedom of speech in speaking out about “controversial issues”, or to support our professors whom we have watched struggle endlessly in their fight for fair contracts, we, the people in higher education, the people who this would affect, do not support this bill.

This is nothing new. In previous hearings last year, opponent testimony turned out in massive numbers. In recent news, protestors simply attending the proponent hearing outnumbered proponents speaking. In the opponent hearing, over 800 people submitted testimony, and the hearing went on for almost the full day. How many of us need to come together for the Ohio Statehouse to realize that we will not stop demanding change? How many more events will we be removed from until our voices are heard? How many times do we as students have to explain what we actually want in higher education?

I have personally been fighting against this bill for two years, along with a huge coalition of students that this bill has brought together in opposition against attacks on our higher education. The continued movement and the recreation of this bill is an insult to us, an insult to our professors, and an insult to Ohio itself. To have it pass after all our work in trying to make our voices heard is a slap in the face that tells us our voices and our beliefs do not matter, our representatives do not represent us, and most importantly, that Ohio is no place for Higher Education.

Respectfully, I implore you, vote no against this bill. When it comes to Higher Education, put your students first.