

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Aubrie Brandon, and I am an undergraduate student at The Ohio State University, pursuing my Bachelor of Social Work and Master's of Social Work. I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB 1 and its companion bill, HB 6.

As part of my education, I am required to complete 400 internship hours, which I have chosen to dedicate to serving teens, college students, and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities—including autism—and their families. My role involves providing essential support, including case management for neurodivergent college students, to ensure they can access their education in the least restrictive manner possible and engage fully in campus life. The passage of SB 1 would severely undermine these supports, negatively impacting my clients' ability to pursue higher education, secure meaningful employment with livable wages, and live in environments that uphold their autonomy and personal rights.

Beyond its impact on the individuals I serve, this bill would also jeopardize my own ability to complete my degree and serve my future clients ethically and effectively, as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics. If SB 1 and HB 6 were to pass, Ohio universities offering Social Work programs—including The Ohio State University—could face the loss of accreditation from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), threatening the future of social work education in the state.

And to the folks outside of this chamber, all across the state, this bill will affect you in one way or another. It may be blunt or very subtle but you are not immune to its impacts. Whether you have a GED or PhD, the destruction these bills will bring to our communities should not be understated. Universities are hubs for research and innovation that have the power to positively change countless lives in fields such as medicine, agriculture, engineering, social work, and more. SB 1 and HB 6 impede this innovation by placing bounds on the education changemakers of all kinds can receive. Thus, impeding the innovation that benefits us all.

This bill is part of a larger pattern of efforts that weaken social safety nets, limit access to essential services, restrict educational opportunities for those who serve vulnerable populations, restrict educational opportunities for those who are vulnerable in our society, and hinder innovation efforts that benefit us all in some capacity. Such policies do not reflect the values of an equitable and just society. I urge you to reconsider the consequences of SB 1 and HB 6, as they would harm not only social work students and professionals but also the countless Ohioans who rely on the support systems we work to uphold and change for the better. We fight to make sure our clients and patients have the resources to survive and thrive in whatever ways they see fit. We work alongside your constituents to ensure access to you and give you your career. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Aubrie Brandon

