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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Allison Stevens. I am a new mom, respiratory therapist, maternal health researcher, and public health practitioner. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

SB 1 is an extreme threat to healthcare, public health, and creating a strong, informed workforce. By limiting the content professional educators can teach in the classroom, Ohio's healthcare and public health students will be ill-equipped to lead Ohio to a healthier future.

Language in the bill defines controversial beliefs or policies as "any belief or policy that is the subject of political controversy, including issues such as climate policies, electoral politics, foreign policy, diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, immigration policy, marriage, or abortion," and would require institutions to affirm and declare that faculty and staff allow students to "reach their own conclusions about all controversial beliefs or policies and shall not seek to indoctrinate any social, political, or religious point of view." From a healthcare and public health perspective, this would mean topics like preventing maternal deaths, a cause we can all agree is worthy of attention no matter your political affiliation, would be nearly impossible to learn about and therefore address effectively. Maternal deaths occur almost 2 times more often in Black women and to those insured by Medicaid when compared to White women. Additionally, the underlying causes of maternal deaths among White women (mental health conditions) differ from the leading cause among Black women (cardiovascular disease) and those insured by Medicaid. By looking at this data among different groups of women, we can implement evidence-based programming to reduce more deaths from happening - and it works!!!! This is called equity.

SB 1 would fundamentally sew fear in educators and prevent them from even broaching topics like this in the classroom for fear of being seen as "indoctrinating" their students into their social/political point of view. Educating about data-driven, equitable programming to prevent moms from dying isn't a point of view - it's science, it's math, and it's real.

I don't want to live in a state where we ignore fundamental educational opportunities that help prevent moms from dying- do you? SB 1 would make Ohio that type of state.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this *harmful, extremist* bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Allison Stevens