

Testimony of Alistair Kraft
Before the House Higher Education Committee
Representative Tom Young, Chair
March 9, 2025

Chair Young, Vice-Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio and members of the Higher Education Committee,

I am testifying on behalf of myself as a private citizen who values education.

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Alistair Kraft. I am an editor now, but prior to my current job I spent a number of years getting an advanced degree and then teaching at the university level. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

Despite the fact that I went to a huge high school, there wasn't a lot of diversity in the school. Most everyone was white, middle class, and likely from a Catholic background. The first time I was really exposed to a wide range of people who were different from me was when I went to Ohio State University. While there, I studied literature and loved reading books from authors who had lived different lives. Making it a punishable offense to discuss or acknowledge that people bring their own varying experiences to the table is harmful, confusing, and frankly impossible to enforce. Simply sitting in a classroom will show students that there are people who aren't like them, and they are all equally human. Pretending that's not the case changes nothing, but will impede the ability to have open, frank, and productive class discussions.

Legislation can pass saying anything it wants, but reality is what reality is, and the strength of our nation is the varied backgrounds we can all bring to the table. And the first place many of our young people discover this is at university, where they are supposed to be prepared for their entry to the real world. I'm urging you not to handicap them by censoring speech which does nothing more harmful than reflect the world as it really is.

Our state can be a wonderful place. Let's both teach our young people to appreciate our important part in history, especially regarding the Underground Railroad, and continue to offer institutions of higher learning to bring new blood here who can learn from scratch what Ohio is really about.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful and discriminatory bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.