

Testimony of Emily Casper

Before the Senate Higher Education Committee

Representative Tom Young, Chair

March 9, 2025

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Emily Casper. I am fourth year undergraduate student at the University of Cincinnati. I am majoring in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality studies with a certificate in LGBTQ+ studies. I am testifying today to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 1.

I was born and raised in Cincinnati, and I am a first-generation college student. When I turned 18, I was not financially in a place where I was able to attend college, and I didn't know if I ever realistically would be. At 23, after working full-time for several years, I decided that I deserved a chance to be the best version of myself. Shortly after, I found the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality degree and I set this as my end goal. I enrolled at Cincinnati State Community College where I spent 2 years, working hard and getting a great GPA so that I could ensure I would get accepted at UC. What I have learned over the last year and a half being at UC in this degree path will guide me for the rest of my life. Implementing this policy would eliminate my degree path, disallowing me from receiving the bachelor's degree that I have been working so hard to get.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion give people a better understanding and empathy for communities that they are not personally a part of. Social workers, crisis support workers, and community relationship specialists are just some of the many career paths that are trained and use DEI in their everyday practices. Eliminating DEI would mean these people taking on essential roles in society will no longer be trained on how to appropriately interact with some of the most vulnerable and at-risk populations like the LGBTQ+ community. These vulnerable minority groups often rely on people who've been trained in DEI practices to help guide and protect them while they are becoming impactful and important members of our community.

For these reasons, I am testifying to oppose Senate Bill 1. This bill will negatively impact minority communities such as; African Americans, LGBTQ+ people, immigrants, and women. I ask that you please consider my testimony and vote to remove the DEI ban from Senate Bill 1.

Thank you.