

Testimony of Francisco L. Torres, Ph.D.
Before the House Higher Education Committee
Rep. Tom Young, Chair
March 11, 2025

Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and Members of the Higher Education Committee:

My name is Dr. Francisco L. Torres, and I am an Assistant Professor at Kent State University. I **do not** represent Kent State University but am submitting testimony as a private citizen **in opposition** to SB1/HB6.

SB 1/HB 6 are an affront to freedom of speech, academic freedom, the right to protest, equity and inclusion in Higher Education and thus Ohio. These bills do not address current issues in higher education like funding and should not be passed because of possible brain drain and infringement on core values that make this country great.

When I first learned about the Republican Party, I learned about the bravery of those who stood against slavery and worked with President Lincoln to end the Civil War. It was from this history, a story of a party going against the grain for the greater good that I became interested in education. Through education, we have the ability to remind our country of the bravery of some to stand against injustice, sometimes failing but always seeking to make the world a better place. As of late, this party's narrative has shifted, turning away from its past and instead seeking to undermine the ability to debate, protest, uphold academic freedom, and to abolish DEI, one of the foundational tenants of your party from the time of Lincoln. The Republican party of old understood that we as a nation are stronger together, that diversity made us powerful, equity allowed all of us a chance to succeed, and that inclusion meant all of us deserved a seat at the table to dream of a better America for all.

Committee members, I hope that you return to the past and remember that our guiding light are the triumphs we have had together as a people, with science and facts on our side for the betterment of all, rather than the few. I also implore you to forget what other states like Florida or Texas have done and instead ask yourselves: who are we as Ohioans? Who do we stand for? Whose history do we uplift? My hope is that you remember you joined public service to serve and solve real issues like the Republicans of old and that you decide to go back to that, to stand alone if needed and protect our rights in Ohio.

Please vote no to SB 1/HB 6. You will never regret it!

Best,

Francisco L. Torres