

Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and members of the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on Senate Bill 1.

My name is Drew Belcher and I am a student at Miami University.

DEI is a fundamentally destructive ideology that prioritizes group identity such as race, gender, and ethnicity over equality, skills, and intellectual merit. Forcing this ideology on students undermines excellence, reduces people to their demographics, and breeds resentment rather than fairness. The result is a bureaucratic nightmare where meritocracy is sacrificed on the altar of woke politics, leaving institutions like higher education weaker and society more fractured. Diversity for the sake of diversity is not a strength but rather a weakness that sows division instead of unity.

Miami University has spent nearly **\$2,200,000** in the last four years on their Office of Diversity Affairs according to public budget records obtained from Miami's budget office. The current center for student diversity and inclusion office currently occupies a central and prominent space in our student center. When you walk in the building one of the first things you are greeted with is a lineup of 14 diversity flags including the pride progress flag, Asexual flag, and pansexual pride flag, just to name a few.

These flags aren't just decorations—they're emblematic of the death of meritocracy in higher education. Colleges and universities have abandoned their core mission of promoting intellectual excellence in favor of woke virtue-signaling, where identity politics trump actual achievement. Instead of rewarding hard work and ability, these institutions have become obsessed with signaling their commitment to identity politics, often sacrificing intellectual rigor and independent thought. If the goal of education is to cultivate the best and brightest minds, then DEI policies are actively working against that mission.—and the result is a generation of students less prepared, less competitive, and more entitled than ever before.

I urge you to support Senate Bill 1. Thank you for your time and I'd be happy to answer any questions.

Additional Information:

When answering a question that a member of the committee asks:

Through the Chair to the Representative... (then proceed with their answer)