

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 Benjamin Kennedy, and I am a student at Wright State University. As a college junior, I am very much familiar with the state of higher education in this great state, and I believe that SB1 takes many commonsense steps that would lead to increased prosperity for a failing higher education system. For example, as a white student who works hard to prosper educationally, I feel that it is of the utmost importance to remove all DEI from the scholarship process. Far too many times do we see such measures lead to harm for the overall wellbeing of hard-working Ohioans, simply because they were born white. Aren't we beyond that level of blatant racism? I also feel strongly that the proposed requirement for annual evaluations for faculty, including those with tenure, is of the utmost importance. I have seen far too many times the effects of an ideologically motivated professor with tenure, and the sheer feeling of invincibility that they hold. At times, I have even attended classes so bitterly ideological, off topic, and uncomfortable that the majority of students do not even attend class when it is not a test day. Classes should be on topic and unbiased. This is the standard which we students expect in return for tens of thousands of dollars in tuition. If a professor cannot hold themselves to this standard, then I believe that evaluations would be the proper way to take care of this. I also heavily support the idea that higher education institutions should not be allowed to take a position on any controversial belief or policy. The sheer discomfort and alienation created by my college taking such stances leads to a feeling of division and fear among many students, and this is not acceptable. There is far more within this bill that I find myself in deep support of, but these are the areas in which I feel this bill would be of the most necessity for Ohio college students like me. Ohio is the best state in the union, and we should uphold the best higher education standards in the nation. I firmly believe that SB1 is the first major step towards this.

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