

Written Testimony in Support of Ohio Senate Bill 1

Zachary Dilbeck

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Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 1. My name is Zachary Dilbeck, and I am writing to express my support for this legislation based on my experiences and observations as an Assistant Professor.

This piece of legislation covers a variety of important educational topics, but I would like to address the proposed changes to institutional DEI initiatives.

I believe that the disproportionate investment in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives has had several unintended negative consequences for higher education institutions.

1. **Impact on Enrollment and Retention:** In my experience, the prioritization of DEI initiatives has diverted resources away from universally beneficial programs and services that support all students. This misallocation of resources has contributed to challenges in enrollment and retention, as many students do not see their needs or aspirations addressed by these narrowly focused programs.

2. **Public Mistrust in Higher Education:** The focus on DEI has also exacerbated public mistrust in colleges and universities. Many in the public perceive these initiatives as ideological and disconnected from the core mission of higher education, which is to provide rigorous academic instruction and prepare students for meaningful careers. This perception undermines the credibility and public standing of our institutions.

3. **Negative Impact on Academic and Intellectual Freedom:** Finally, I have observed that DEI frameworks often create environments where open dialogue and diverse viewpoints are constrained. Faculty and students may feel pressured to conform to specific narratives, fearing social or professional repercussions. This stifles the intellectual freedom that is essential to the pursuit of knowledge and the fostering of critical thinking.

Senate Bill 1, while not perfect, provides an opportunity to refocus higher education on its primary goals: academic excellence, intellectual freedom, and the preparation of students to contribute meaningfully to society. By addressing the overreach of DEI initiatives, this legislation can help restore balance and public trust in our institutions.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully,

Dr. Zachary Dilbeck



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COMMITTEE

Witness Form

Today's Date 27 January 2025

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Organization Representing: _____

Testifying on Bill Number: SB 1

Testimony: Verbal Written Both

Testifying As: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist? Yes No

Special Requests: _____

