



SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL No. 1

Presented to
Senate Higher Education Committee

January 29, 2025

Beau Euton
On behalf of
Opportunity Solutions Project

Good afternoon, Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingraham and members of the Senate Higher Education Committee. My name is Beau Euton and I'm here today in support of Senate Bill 1 on behalf of the Opportunity Solutions Project, a non-profit advocacy organization that seeks to improve lives through free enterprise, individual liberty, and a limited, accountable government.

SB 1 is an important bill to restore confidence in Ohio's university system and ensure that taxpayer resources are not being spent on illegal and divisive programs that create tension on campus and restrict freedom of expression.

DEI programs are costly and ineffective

Higher education in the United States is facing a crisis. Only a third of Americans have a high degree of confidence in higher education, and 68 percent say that colleges are heading in the wrong direction.¹ Americans lack trust in institutions of higher learning due to political indoctrination, a curriculum that fails to teach relevant skills, and skyrocketing tuition.²

Ohio universities are not immune to this trend. Enrollment in universities in Ohio has declined nine percent since 2014, and community colleges have seen an 11 percent drop.³ Meanwhile, tuition continues to rise, fueled by ever-expanding administrative departments focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion.⁴ Across the state, nearly every public university has a DEI department with many full-time staff administrators.⁵ At Ohio State University, an audit revealed 200 DEI administrators that cost the school more than \$13 million annually.⁶

Not only are DEI offices expensive, but they are also ineffective and promote dangerous a ideology that threatens our country's core values. Schools with large DEI administrations have less inclusive and diverse environments.⁷ At OSU's college of medicine, the DEI department encouraged medical students to treat patients based on their race, instead of evaluating them individually.⁸ The same school subjected students and faculty to the widely discredited Implicit Association Test and recommended radical leftist reading materials such as the 1619 project.⁹

Despite so-called diversity efforts, colleges lack diversity of thought. Students report feeling like they can't speak their minds and faculty risk being disciplined for expressing mainstream beliefs that are out of step with radical leftist orthodoxy.¹⁰

The solution

SB 1 is an important step to restoring Ohioans' confidence in the university system. This bill would promote academic freedom and freedom of expression, protecting faculty and students' rights to express their viewpoints. It would also prohibit harmful diversity efforts, including mandatory diversity statements for hiring, compulsory training for students and staff, and funding for departments that promote discriminatory DEI practices.

It would also protect students' education from disruption by prohibiting striking among university staff. This legislation would also promote transparency and accountability by requiring periodic review of tenure.

Ohio universities can lead the nation in promoting academic rigor and job readiness instead of ideological indoctrination. I thank Senator Cirino for introducing this crucial legislation and encourage the committee to support it.

¹Jeffrey Jones, "U.S. Confidence in higher education now closely divided," Gallup (2024), <https://news.gallup.com/poll/646880/confidence-higher-education-closely-divided.aspx>.

² Ibid.

³Megan Henry, "What challenges are Ohio colleges and universities encountering," Ohio Capital Journal (2025), <https://www.news5cleveland.com/news/state/what-challenges-are-ohio-colleges-and-universities-encountering>.

⁴ LaMont Jones Jr., "One culprit in rising college costs: Administrative expenses," U.S. News (2023), <https://www.usnews.com/education/articles/one-culprit-in-rising-college-costs>.

⁵ Author's review of Ohio public universities' websites

⁶ Elad Vaida, "Ohio State University poured \$13 million into DEI officials' salaries," Campus Reform (2024), <https://www.campusreform.org/article/ohio-state-university-poured-13-million-dei-officials-salaries-/27185>

⁷ Liesel Crocker, "Why states should defund DEI," Foundation for Government Accountability (2024), <https://thefga.org/research/why-states-should-defund-dei/>.

⁸ Laura L. Morgan, "The Ohio State University College of Medicine: A destination for indoctrination in health equity and anti-racism," Do No Harm (2023), https://donoharmmedicine.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/DNH_OhioStateReport.pdf.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Nathan Honeycutt, "Faculty survey: Support for free speech varies by academic discipline," Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (2023), <https://www.thefire.org/news/faculty-survey-support-free-speech-varies-academic-discipline>.