

02.10.25

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Maggie Morrison, I am 23 years old and from Worthington, Ohio. Currently, I am a Masters of Social Work student at The Ohio State University, and I graduated from OSU last spring with a Bachelor's of Arts in Political Science specializing in American Politics, with minors in History and Aging Studies. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

Reading my letter of admission to Ohio State was one of the best moments of my life; I felt such excitement and promise knowing that I had the opportunity to learn and grow at my dream school, and also such fear knowing I had no way to pay for it. That excitement and promise was only doubled, and the fear melted, when I opened the email announcing that I earned the Office of Diversity and Inclusion Morrill Excellence Scholarship. I wrote my essay about working in assisted living through high school and learning the importance of Intergenerational connections for the overall well-being of older adults and young people, and about my experience being a student representative on the construction committee for a new high school, where I advocated for inclusive architecture that integrates special education and traditional classrooms. I talked about my hopes of working in Aging and creating community at Ohio State, and for that and academic performance I was awarded a full 4-year scholarship. The chances I and my fellow scholars were given because of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives ensured that we could continue our efforts to make our communities great as we learned from the best educators in the country and became even more apt to be world changers after graduation.

Being an ODI Morrill scholar opened doors to new volunteer opportunities, including but not limited to fundraising for cancer relief, procuring and providing food and supplies for the unhoused population near campus, and leading peer support programs. Additionally, my education at tOSU as an ODI scholar continued to instill values of diversity, equity, and inclusion, which I have been able to apply in every aspect of life in a positive way. Work wise, I have been able to provide culturally competent personal care to Older Adults in the Muslim and immigrant communities in Columbus to ensure their needs are being met in a way that respects and honors their autonomy. As a Master's of Social Work student, I am currently interning as a case manager at Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging, where I assess members for eligibility for services like personal care aides, durable medical equipment and minor home modifications, meal services, adult day programs, transportation, and more necessary services to be able to age in place, which not only vastly improves our members lives, but also saves the state a large amount of money by keeping people on Medicaid out of expensive nursing facilities. Unfortunately, the regressive and restrictive nature of this bill would make it so that Social Work students at Ohio State and other higher education institutions in the state lose their Council on Social Work Education accreditation. This loss puts social work students in jeopardy, as a Social Worker cannot be licensed without a degree from an accredited university, and also puts the entire state of Ohio's population at risk of losing essential care and services due to the lack of new Social Workers to provide them. Ohio needs DEI.

I can only hope that my personal testimony can serve as one example of why this backwards and destructive bill is wrong for Ohio. Your NO vote on this bill is a YES for Ohioans. Thank you again for the chance to testify.