

Testimony of Jaiden Hilton
Before the Senate Higher Education Committee
Senator Kristina Roegner, Chair
February 10, 2025

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingram, and Members of the Higher Education Committee:

My name is Jaiden Hilton, and I am an undergraduate student at the University of Cincinnati. I do not represent the University of Cincinnati, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen.

This bill, will infringe upon my rights as an Ohio student in many ways.

I am majoring in Speech Language Hearing Sciences, and I hope to one day become a speech language pathologist. In my work, I hope to work with bilingual children, as I have been studying Spanish for the past 7 years, and I will undoubtedly work with children with disabilities.

That being said, diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, which this bill is heavily targeting, have a direct impact on my learning, and the wellbeing of my future patients. Diversity encompasses the idea of including different people, with different backgrounds. Outside of what you may be typically shown, with diversity simply encompassing people with melanated skin and those in the LGBTQIA+ community, diversity includes everything that makes each one of us unique including. For example, economic, parental, veteran, or disability status are a part of diversity.

By taking away these initiatives, me and my peers' ability to learn about how to best serve the populations I will treat will be greatly impacted. My ability to perform my job will be diminished.

I am currently in the graduate school application process. If this bill passes, I will have to more strongly consider attending one of the out of state schools I applied to. Humbly, I am a strong candidate for graduate school admissions. During my time at the University I have maintained a 4.0 GPA, simultaneously held four different leadership positions for various organizations and committees, sat in as the only student member of a committee working to hire a department head, presented research on bilingual dyslexia assessment, and more. I am proud of the education I have been granted at an Ohio institution, and I would hate to have to leave my home state, just to get adequately trained for my profession.

When you cast your vote, please consider the education of all of Ohio's students.

Thank you for your time,

Jaiden Hilton