

## SB 1

I am a PhD candidate at Kent State University, here today to speak on Senate Bill 1. I am concerned by the inherent contradiction in SB 1, which claims to promote intellectual diversity but prohibits Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training, offices, scholarships, and other initiatives. Under the guise of equal opportunity and diversity of thought, this policy will instead ensure that hegemonic ideas remain entrenched in higher education.

There is a reason we have DEI initiatives. We cannot have true equality without equity; in order to provide equal access to education, we must take into account that our society's history and deep-rooted beliefs have led to inequalities. People with minority statuses are often viewed as less competent. Job candidates who are people of color are less likely to be hired. Students of color often have more barriers to attending college, and when they do attend majority-white schools they often experience exclusionary or racist environments. When institutions first became more selective in their admissions 100-75 years ago, they intentionally selected white, protestant men from higher socioeconomic classes. These things are not controversial beliefs – they are facts supported by research.

DEI initiatives provide a way to disrupt the reproduction of these social inequalities. DEI based scholarships provide access to higher education for many students from lower-income backgrounds. Once in the classroom, DEI training for instructors makes that education more accessible for students of varying backgrounds and cultural perspectives. DEI considerations in hiring add to the diversity of faculty, which improves learning outcomes for all students, and ensure that institutions are adequately able to understand and address students' needs. These initiatives serve women, students with disabilities, veterans, students of color, LGBTQ+ students, low-income and first generation students, and more. Prohibiting DEI initiatives will make higher education less accessible for many students, and ultimately decrease the very intellectual diversity that this bill purportedly promotes.

Banning Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion while demanding intellectual diversity is contradictory, and I implore you to vote no on senate bill 1.