

Alex Fish

SB 1 Opposition Testimony

11 February 2025

SB 1 Opposition Testimony

Good afternoon, Madame Chair Roegner, Mr. Vice Chair Cirino, Madame Ranking Member Ingram, et al on the Ohio Senate Higher Education Committee!

Thank you all so very much for giving me the opportunity to give this testimony to you this afternoon! My name is Alex Fish, my age is 21, and I use he/him and they/them pronouns. I've been living in Mentor, Ohio, 25 miles NE of Cleveland (in Mr. Cirino's Senate District 18) since 2007, but native to Metro Detroit, MI. I formerly went to Tri-C/Cuyahoga Community College (did not graduate) and am/was headed towards a major in Arts & Sciences Geography. I strongly oppose this controversial "Enact Advance Ohio Higher Education Act" aka Senate Bill 1.

There are many components of this bill that are considered harmful and dangerous. First is the removal of DEI and some other departments of academia. Removing them goes against the point as to why we are in college/university/school (we are there to *learn*, NOT have our services removed). This is an exact echo of book bans/censorships in K12 schools (which my old school

district has been trying to do but failed). DEI, IDEA, (or any acronym(s) with the initials for Diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, et al), is critical to maintaining positive relationships within the fields of academia, workforce and out there in the world. It isn't just to do with people that are a different race to you. DEI has been in place at companies for decades. It is nothing new! DEI is NOT indoctrination, and we need to stop politicizing the term or it in general!

To make a long story short: DEI isn't anything to do with policies or preferential treatment, while differing from affirmative action/positive discrimination, but it is a list of things to ensure anti-discriminatory practices, while abiding by federal, state, etc., anti-discriminatory laws and among other things. Lastly, places with DEI are more likely to boost businesses and may give them a more positive reputation, in the end.

Next, wanting to prohibit faculty strikes. Straight up, it is a violation of the First Amendment of free speech, full stop! It also would make the process of bargaining more complicated, a process that is critical for unions. Sure, the students are the absolute reason colleges are in existence. Students, staff and faculty safety, health, and well-being is the no.1 priority too.

I ask you please consider this testimony and vote nay on this controversial bill. Once again, I thank you for giving me this very opportunity to testify this afternoon. I will now take any questions that you all may have.

Works Cited

Adamczeski, Ryan. "What Is Dei, What Does It Mean, and Why Are Companies Really Getting Rid of It?" *Advocate.com*, Advocate, 3 Feb. 2025, www.advocate.com/news/what-is-dei#rebellitem1.

Hendrix, Sheridan. "Faculty Unions Say Strike BAN for Ohio College Employees Would Create Power Imbalance." *The Columbus Dispatch*, The Columbus Dispatch, 20 Mar. 2023, www.dispatch.com/story/news/education/2023/03/20/ohio-college-faculty-unions-say-strike-ban-would-promote-inequity/70013177007/.

Moore, ReNika. "Trump's Executive Orders Rolling Back Dei and Accessibility Efforts, Explained: ACLU." *American Civil Liberties Union*, 24 Jan. 2025, www.aclu.org/news/racial-justice/trumps-executive-orders-rolling-back-dei-and-accessibility-efforts-explained.

Vivian. "Affirmative Action vs. Dei: The Difference between Them." *Hollywood Life*, Hollywood Life, 24 Jan. 2025, hollywoodlife.com/feature/affirmative-action-vs-dei-differences-5364722/.