

Testimony of Lillian Leach  
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 Lillian Leach, and I am a resident of St. Bernard, Ohio, 45217 as well as a student at University of Cincinnati. I do not represent the University of Cincinnati, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen.

As a student, and future speech-language pathologist, and a human being, I am deeply concerned about the passing of Senate Bill 1. The idea that diversity, equity, and inclusion are discriminatory practices is demonstrably false. I invite you to walk into a college and look around. I can assure you there are plenty of White students. As a White student myself, I have never in my entire college career felt uncomfortable or discriminated against because of my race at school. I am not sure if my classmates of different racial backgrounds can stay the same.

The inclusion of DEI principles in the curriculum is essential to receiving a well-rounded education. The real world is a diverse place full of diverse ideas. It is doing students a disservice not to be exposed to all ideas and taught information based on evidence. For example, as a future speech-language pathologist, understanding different cultures will be essential to serving my clients from different cultural backgrounds effectively, as culture and dialect impacts language development. Individuals like myself who are from rural areas with limited experience with people of different cultural backgrounds really need this education.

Finally, this is infringing on free speech. College is a place where free speech and the exchange of ideas should thrive. Learning other perspectives and sharing your own is key to being able to learn how to think critically and to get along with other people. This bill effectively muzzles professors and students in a way I feel is antithetical to the first amendment and lawmakers who value the United States Constitution ought to be ashamed for attempting to trample on such a fundamental American right. I love my country and I love ALL the kinds of people who make it what it is.

Thank you for your time.

Lillie Leach

4288 Minmor Drive

Cincinnati, OH 45217

