

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 Dr. Allen Mallory. I am an assistant professor at the Ohio State University in the College of Education and Human Ecology, the third largest college by enrollment. I am housed in the Department of Human Sciences and teach the program of Human Development and Family Sciences. I have taught courses on human sexuality, romantic relationships, and family relationships at OSU since 2021. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

I am opposed to SB1 and its companion bill HB 6: its broad language is illogical, it would eliminate the same intellectual diversity it claims to encourage, and it would have dangerous consequences for faculty, staff, and students.

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I am opposed to SB1 and its companion bill HB 6. On its face, the bill seeks to eliminate DEI, while claiming to encourage intellectual diversity—both things cannot be true. I teach courses on romantic and family relationships, I cannot avoid discussing “marriage” in the course. This would eliminate conversation, regardless of perspective, on marriage. I often teach couple and family therapists in training, and many of my undergraduate students go on to be employed in service-orientated positions to work with families. How do I help prepare them to work with families with unique needs without talking about any “belief or policy that is the subject of political controversy”?

Every semester I have taught my classes, students have thanked me for teaching the class as it is often the only time during college that they get to discuss topics related to romantic relationships and sexuality. One openly Christian student who was engaged, excitedly told me how they had been having helpful conversations with their fiancée about the class about topics they had not discussed before and that they felt better prepared for marriage. Equally important, I have had students be grateful to see themselves or loved ones represented in the diverse ways that relationships are formed. During discussions, students ask questions about misinformation about relationships and sexuality that they would otherwise not have known where to get accurate information—during a discussion about reproduction one semester, a student explained that they heard that there was Planned B included with certain pregnancy tests if you didn’t want to keep a baby, something they and other students had seen on social media. I sent them information from the company dismissing the exact claim on their website.

Students attend universities expecting to be exposed to diverse perspectives through interaction with their peers, faculty, or other university initiations. Forcing faculty to “allow and encourage students to reach their own conclusions” without any input regarding their expertise is doing students a disservice. Universities are one of the only places where students can truly be exposed to diverse perspectives, hear the perspectives of global experts on these topics, and engage in debates about these diverse perspectives. The ever-increasing amount of misinformation and polarization in media sources make universities an even more important resource for having an informed public. Universities cannot serve this purpose with prohibition of discussing certain “controversial” topics.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful and destructive bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.