

Written Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 1

Alayna Lopez

University Student

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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 Alayna Lopez. I am a fourth year student at Ohio State University studying Communications Analysis with a minor in Youth Development. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

I would like to address the policy proposals surrounding DEI initiatives and intellectual diversity. I believe the proposed actions in SB 1 will limit accessibility to higher education for future students.

As a first-generation college student and future educator that has benefitted from DEI initiatives, I have firsthand experience on how these programs can provide access and act as an intervention tool for lower-class individuals and minorities. It would have been financially impossible for me to attend Ohio State without my DEI funded scholarship. DEI gave me the chance to dream beyond poverty and violence. DEI allows me to learn how I can make positive contributions to my community. DEI gives me the power to prop the door of opportunity open for future kids like me via education.

By dismantling DEI initiatives, Ohio's academic institutions will lack the necessary tools to provide social mobility and address systemic barriers for marginalized groups. Scholarships provide opportunity, and on-campus groups/programs provide safe spaces where all students can belong and thrive. DEI initiatives foster environments that are diverse in thought, culturally aware, and allow students from different backgrounds to strive together and challenge one another in an educated/healthy manner.

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

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.