

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 Jessica Harper. I am a public school educator teaching American Government in the Jackson City School District. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

Passage of SB 1 would essentially end higher education as an effective means of preparing students to be successful in today's society. Discontinuing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs on Ohio's public university campuses will have a detrimental effect on students, faculty, and staff. Diversity is the backbone of university campuses throughout the state.

According to the American Council on Education,<sup>TM</sup> "diversity enriches the educational experience, promotes personal growth and a healthy society," and "enhances America's economic competitiveness." Without an education that includes DEI content, our future leaders and business owners will not function well in a diverse society.

I am a graduate of The Ohio State University (B.S., 2004) and The Ohio University (M.Ed., 2016.) Both campuses are extremely socially and academically diverse. The diversity on the campuses helped prepare me for the world outside of my hometown of Wellston, a city of around 5000 people with very little diversity. Had I not had the opportunity to attend diverse universities, I would have been ill-prepared for my future career as an educator.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful and destructive bill. The state of Ohio needs to support DEI on university campuses to ensure a productive and sustainable future for its citizens.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jessica Harper