

**Opponent Testimony for Senate Bill 1**  
**Senate Higher Education Committee**  
**2/11/25**

**Trinity Rudolph, Student**

Chair Kristina D. Roegner, Vice chair Jerry C. Cirino, Ranking Member Cathrine D. Ingram, and members of the Senate Higher Education Committee

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Trinity Rudolph, and I am a student at Kent State University. I have written this testimony to oppose the prohibition of scholarships for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

According to Merriam Webster, equity is the “fairness or justice in the way people are treated.” Inclusion is “the act or practice of including and accommodating people who have historically been excluded.” Diversity is the “the condition of having or being composed of differing elements.” I believe that these three things are what improves higher education. Human beings are naturally complex. Equity opens doors to allow for people of all races, cultures, ethnicities, gender identities, and disabilities to have the resources they need to be successful. As a Black woman who is a descendant of slaves, I have learned all too well from my family history the cruelty against my race by people who wanted homogeneity, inequity, and exclusion. In the past, powerful institutions developed ways to prevent marginalized groups from being able to support themselves financially. My family members, past and present, were and are victims of this system. I have frequently listened to their stories of how difficult it is for them to get through high school and college due to discrimination and financial instability. The very remembrance of these stories brings me great grief. However, through the developments of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), various people, including my friends and family, are able to enjoy the ease of being able to afford an education through scholarships.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion scholarships break down the walls of white supremacy and exclusion to allow marginalized groups to be able to have the financial support to get an education. Diversity allows for everyone to share their stories and coexist just as it should be in the real world. In the present day, all people, regardless of their differing identities, are entitled to a proper education, which is what DEI scholarships try to achieve. The removal of these scholarships will set a dangerous precedent and only serve as a tool of oppression against students wanting to attend universities in Ohio. I hope after reading my opposition to this bill, my testimony hasn't fallen on deaf ears. My hope is that the Senate Higher Education Committee and sponsors at least listen to these two things. The first is that you all must “Learn to do good. Seek justice. Help the oppressed...” (Isaiah 1:17, *New Living Translation*). The second is that, “Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker, but helping the poor honors him” (Proverbs 14:31, *New Living Translation*). I ask you to please consider my testimony and vote against Senate Bill One.