

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Higher Education Committee,

My name is Abra Lisowski, and I am a student at Case Western Reserve University getting my Master of Social Work. I grew up in Cleveland Heights and attended the Cleveland Heights-University Heights public schools for my K-12 education. My motivation for being here today to ask you to oppose Senate Bill 1 and its companion bill HB 6 is twofold: I am concerned about what this bill could mean for the rest of my personal education, and I am also concerned about my family, friends, and my broader community.

Throughout my undergraduate and graduate level educations, I have taken a wide range of courses that have offered me many different perspectives that I would have never known about without taking these courses. When looking through a list of humanities and social science courses I have taken throughout my time here, though, I am struggling to find one that would *not* be attacked by the contents of this bill. During my undergraduate studies at CWRU, I took a course titled “Race and Racism in the United States”, which is an upper-level sociology course. SB 1 contains broad and confusing language about “intellectual diversity” and “controversial beliefs or policies” which stifles academic freedom and would make it difficult for professors to navigate teaching subjects like this one.

Thinking of my family, I feel particularly concerned about the portions of the bill that attack workers rights. My dad is a college professor here in Ohio, and so it is really alarming to see that the bill would mandate public posting of syllabi and instructor information. It also mandates the public posting of a calendar with detailed information about course topics, which essentially just invites off-campus individuals who are not associated with the university at all to become involved, able to flood a professor’s inbox with harassment, and even allow for people to show up on campus on a day they know a “controversial” topic might be covered in class. This is obviously a huge threat to the safety and integrity of education, and I would never want my Dad or any other professors and students to experience this.

SB 1 mainly attacks public institutions, which is of great concern to me as someone who has benefited from these institutions in the past, and who has a lot of friends who are currently enrolled in public institutions. Private institutions may not be as affected by this bill as public ones, but the consequences are still there. Firstly, SB 1 prohibits private institutions from receiving state funds unless they submit a statement affirming to uphold the ideologies of this bill. On top of this, I personally feel that an attack on education anywhere is an attack on education everywhere, so if this bill is able to pass the cultural consequence will certainly be felt everywhere. SB 1 is an atrocious bill and it should not be passed under any circumstances.