

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 Sarah Thomas. I am a single working mother in Ohio. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

This morning, my son was attacked by a neighbor's dog. Thankfully, this wasn't a major incident because the dog is a ratty little ankle biter breed and my son is 15.

But had it been my 108-lb Weimaraner and their 5-year-old son, the conversation would be very different. Why? Because my dog is a much bigger dog, right? But that's discrimination. I doubt she would have to do more than scare their child and they'd be all up in arms. But she never would. My 6-year-old Weimaraner is a gentle giant. This same neighbor dog has come at me while I was walking my dog... on the other side of the street mind you. They quickly got their dog away from us, because I stood between our pets and I would have kicked that dog back across the street if it tried to attack my gentle girl. Would I have been in the right? I absolutely think so. She came off their property to attack me on a sidewalk of another neighbor. My son said he wasn't even on the neighbor's sidewalk, he was in the street when this dog attacked him this morning.

So it's my right to go after these people regarding their dog, right? Regardless of its size, it's not okay for it to be attacking anyone and I will be demanding they keep that menace on a leash or lead from here on out. But it's a different story when it's the big dog. Had it been my girl, they'd probably be threatening to put her down. Why? It's okay to discriminate against my dog simply because she's bigger? I don't think so and I doubt you do either.

I don't like politics. In fact, I'm sure I hold myself back in many ways because I avoid them. I really don't like to argue with people, especially on issues that aren't directly affecting me. But we are ALL going to be affected by the loss of DEI, it's only a matter of time. So many of us are minorities and love others who are. So why is this country suddenly supportive of or complacent with the removal of all DIVERSITY, EQUALITY, and INCLUSION from all things? It's not okay. You should be outraged! Just like I would be should my dog have her life threatened or taken based simply on her size. If you're truly the bigger, better person, why would you worry about someone else being offered EQUALITY and INCLUSION? Have we really forgotten the atrocities this country has committed against many of the people that make this country so diverse?

America is supposed to be the melting pot of the world. Almost every American came here to escape some form of oppression. But we think it's okay to forget that when it comes to anyone of another race, gender, or sexuality now? No, it's not okay.

I know I have white privilege. I don't choose to or want to have it. I just happen to look a lot whiter than my DNA proves I am. So I have an obligation to speak up for anyone that doesn't have it. And that's EXACTLY what DEI is about. WE NEED DEI. Don't let them take away our right to treat people as they deserve to be – with EQUALITY. I'm done avoiding the politics because my freedoms and

rights are being attacked and I'm not one to just stand by and watch things happen. Just like I'm not going to stand by and allow it if that dog comes for me or mine again.

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

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Sarah Thomas