

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 Arie Goodman. I was born in Ohio and am a graduate of two of its public universities where I received life-changing educational instruction and experience. I am also a homeschooling parent of a graduating senior who has earned admission to attend college here in the state. Because of the multitude of harmful proposals in this legislation, too many to mention in my testimony today, I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

This bulldozer of a bill threatens to destroy our state on various levels, all in the name of addressing problems that do not exist. This notion of “controversial topics” being off limits is censorship that whitewashes our history and denies the experiences of all who aren’t white males. If there are problems involving speech in our schools, morality and our constitution require an expansive approach, not the suppression of facts, ideology and opportunity, not the dismantling of supportive organizations and whole fields of study. Some of you speak of cancel culture and indoctrination as you support a bill that limits what people can learn and experience while imposing courses that promote what you deem appropriate. That is not your place. That is not freedom.

Proponents of this bill are guilty of that which they are railing against.

College courses open the door to learning and understanding beyond secondary school, but the value of a college education extends beyond the classroom where you meet students from other backgrounds with experiences different than your own. Many of us grow up in segregated realities with no real understanding of the world’s beautiful diversity. In higher education, we learn of new ideas, cultures, and religions. We make friends with others that we wouldn’t in our previously homogenized lives, realizing that we have much in common despite our perceived differences. In this environment, we learn more about ourselves growing personally and intellectually. We develop new interests and passions as we gain nuance, strengthen our critical thinking, and learn to appreciate and embrace life and understanding beyond our personal experience. This is what it means to be cultured. The opportunity for this enrichment is what students seek when choosing a college.

What is student life like on campus? What kind of student organizations are there? These are common questions for prospective students as they try to envision themselves on the campuses of the universities they are considering. Are there thriving communities of which they can feel a part? Are there courses that will help them make sense of the world and prepare them for successful careers in their field of interest? This bill would ensure that fewer students answer these questions affirmatively for Ohio institutions. More of our graduating high schoolers will leave the state and even less will choose to come here from other states and countries.

This bill does not serve the interests of Ohio families nor those who might consider it for relocation. It is harmful - for everyone. This bill aims to destroy much of what makes our higher

education system strong. It would ensure that Ohio's colleges and universities are no longer attractive to talented professors and the most qualified staff. It would cripple the state's economy, diminish our human capacity, and lessen our quality of life.

This is not what people voted for - no matter how they voted. There are many things to address with regard to higher education. Chief among them is the cost of attendance. This bill would eradicate many of the strengths of our state's institutions and exacerbate their shortcomings by increasing the cost of tuition as they try to comply with these added layers of unnecessary bureaucracy. This committee can best serve our state by building on our strengths and focusing on areas in real need of solutions.

Not only are SB 1 and HB 6 discriminatory, but they would make our schools less competitive with fewer graduates that are ill-prepared for employment in a diverse workforce. The proposed policies would harm the state's economy in part by ruining our prestigious institutions, demoralizing and reducing their staff, and attracting less qualified professors. For the betterment of our state and its residents, current and prospective, I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this extremist bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.