

Friday, February 7, 2025

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 Brooke Hathaway DeSantis. I am a resident of Miami Township in Clermont County. I am a graduate of two public Ohio universities; I earned B.A. from Miami University in 2010 and M.A from University of Cincinnati in 2015. I'm also a mother of two early-childhood and elementary-aged children. My husband and I grew up in the state of Ohio, lived in other states, and returned to Ohio and are raising our children here.

I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

I attended universities in the state of Ohio for two reasons. First, they were excellent schools. Miami – 'the first public ivy' – ranked in the Top 5 of the best undergraduate teaching universities in the nation.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, they were made affordable to me. Funding made possible by the Ohio Department of Education, amongst other agencies, enabled both universities to extend me merit scholarships, grants, and loans.

If SB1 were to become state law (particularly Sec. 3345.029), I fear that the public universities in Ohio would massively deteriorate. Excellent professors will choose to teach at other universities in alternate states, thereby decreasing the quality many of our Ohio schools are known for. I certainly would not have attended Miami University (of Ohio) if its academic rigor was not as well known and recognized – as indicated by the fact that 98% of Miami graduates are employed or continuing their education upon graduation.<sup>2</sup>

Additionally, I oppose the language throughout the bill (Sec. 3345.0216 and Sec. 3345.0217) seeking to eliminate any programs, offices, etcetera relating to equality, inclusivity, and/or diversity. Throughout my time at Ohio public universities, I benefited from from a wide variety of perspectives in my courses - both from the professors and other students enrolled in the same courses. I had one particular professor from Africa who taught political science courses that were so nuanced and excellent because of his diverse perspectives. Under the above proposed legislation, any programs seeking to attract professors like this one would be eliminated, to the great detriment of student success.

Thank for the opportunity to testify before your committee today. I strongly encourage you to protect Ohio public universities and vote no on SB1.

Sincerely,



Brooke Hathaway DeSantis

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. News & World Report, 2022-2023.

<sup>2</sup> Miami University Data, Fall 2021.