

Chairman, members of the committee, my name is Aiden Murley-Schaffer, and I am a student leader involved in campus organizations that support underrepresented students. I strongly oppose Senate Bill 1 for a number of reasons including because it unfairly targets Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs that are vital to student success, it targets higher learning and the pursuit of knowledge and actively works to undermine science being done at research institutions.

As a Trans student, I know firsthand how important DEI initiatives are in creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment. These programs help students like me navigate the challenges of higher education, build community, and access critical resources. By banning DEI initiatives, this bill sends a clear message that Ohio does not value diversity or equal opportunity. It tells marginalized students that we are not welcome, which will only make it harder for our universities to recruit and retain talent. If we truly want Ohio's higher education system to thrive, we must embrace inclusivity, not erase it. Additionally, I am an Environmental Engineering student. I have committed myself to studying the ways in which we can help to combat climate change as we continue to march towards an irreversibly changed world. Senate Bill 1 will limit the ability for students like to me study topics like this by fostering unscientific notions that climate change doesn't exist. I am a student who is committing my life to make the world a better place for all human beings and this Senate Bill will harm the abilities of me and my fellow students to do so. I ask this committee to reject Senate Bill 1 and stand up for all students.