

Opponent Testimony for SB1

Senate Higher Education Committee

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Katherine Robinson, PhD Candidate

The Ohio State University

To the chair, vice chair, and members of the meeting:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Katherine Robinson, and I am a chemical physics PhD candidate from Ohio State University. I wish to discuss today why I am **against** SB1.

As a physicist who works in a field imperative for the technological future of this country (condensed matter physics), I highly advise against the banning and dissolution of DEIs. The DEIs in the physics community are often for protection of those in a minority in physics. For context, the physics community loses a high number of women (a minority in the field) who have received the PhD because of sexual harassment and assault as reported by multiple studies by APS.¹ What this means is there is a huge loss of skill, knowledge, talent, and innovation in the field. As a PhD candidate who runs the growth section of a research laboratory, a loss of a trained student is difficult, as it requires more time and energy for everyone else working to compensate – and that is just for a single student. The loss of trained PhDs due to the fields' toxic working environment and continued harassment is a massive loss to the field. We lose not just women to this, but men indirectly affected as well. I have seen many different types of people leave this field or plane to leave after finishing the PhD because of this toxicity, which affects us all – a toxicity that the DEI works hard to dilute. Losing the DEI in our department, and all departments across the country, would devastate the field.

But who cares about physics? Everyone should, as this is the field that gave us miracles like the atom bomb (high energy physics), the transistor and thus better computing power (condensed matter physics), and put the USA on the moon (astrophysics), just to name *three*. Now my field works on quantum information and quantum computing – both of which we are competing

against other countries to develop first. By dissolving DEIs, we look at falling behind other countries hostile to us. Is this what we want?

To conclude, if you care about the technological advances of this country, **I suggest voting no on SB1**. Thank you for your time. I'm happy to answer any questions.

Katherine Robinson

1. Libarkin, J. Yes, Sexual Harassment Still Drives Women Out of Physics. *APS Advancing Physics* <https://www.aps.org/archives/publications/apsnews/201905/sexual.cfm>.