

Chairperson, members of the committee, my name is J. Lynn, and I am writing this testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 1 in efforts to protect the high education system in the state of Ohio. Last year, I was personally impacted by Senate Bill 83 in a negative way. In a hasty attempt to comply with Senate Bill 83, my employer, a public university in Ohio, terminated my position and removed all departments related to what the state deemed to be “DEI programming.” I have witnessed first-hand the harmful residual effects of legislation such as this, and I can only imagine how damaging a bill like Senate Bill 1 will be on the citizens of Ohio if it were passed. As a result of Senate Bill 83, I was inspired to pursue a career in law to better understand how government actions can yield such effects on the educational system and overall well-being of the state. Years later, I am a first-year law student, once again presented with Senate Bill 83 in the form of Senate Bill 1. Throughout my time as an undergraduate, a professional in higher education, and a law student, I have never encountered a fellow student or professional that believes in the merits of either of the Senate Bills. Senate Bill 1 is clearly out of touch with what is needed to foster a holistic, quality education. I urge you to reject Senate Bill 1, for its flawed, misguided policies do not reflect the interests of Ohio’s constituents.

Senate Bill 83 failed because of the overwhelming opposition from individuals statewide. Restricting what can be discussed at our public universities defeats the very purpose of seeking higher education in the first place, and there is no feasible reason to waste tax dollars on frivolous bills such as this that will do nothing positive for the state of Ohio. The priority should be improving education, and there is no logical reason why restricting access would thereby improve the system. Knowledge is power, and Senate Bill 1 would restrict the people from wielding the power they are entitled to under the United States Constitution.