

## Ohio SB-1 Testimony

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 Claire Ockner. I am a graduate of The Ohio State University, where I majored in Psychology and completed the DEI Certificate Program. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

During my time at The Ohio State University, I was privileged enough to take several courses that would fall under the umbrella of DEI education. These courses contributed a great deal to my understanding of the world around me. My instructors in the WGSS department (Gender & Sexuality Studies) encouraged their students to think critically, ask impactful questions, and lead with empathy. These courses emboldened me to pursue DEI leadership within the Greek Life community at Ohio State, where I served as The Panhellenic Association's first Vice President of Outreach and Inclusion. Learning the values of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and having the opportunity to extend that knowledge to a group of over 3,000 women was the most impactful experience I had at OSU. I implore you to consider the consequences of robbing future students of the chance to learn (and teach) such valuable subjects.

To quote Bryan Stevenson, founder of the Equal Justice Initiative and speaker at Ohio State's 2023 Commencement Ceremony, "presumptions of dangerousness and guilt" are, what I believe, the driving factor behind SB-1. What is so dangerous about teaching students to think critically about identity and power? What threat is posed by teaching a history that includes multiple perspectives? I find myself unable to conceive of an answer to these questions. Any possible answer, in my opinion, will likely point to a fundamental misunderstanding of the content and methodology of DEI education.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful and reactionary bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Claire Ockner  
The Ohio State University (2023)