

Chairman, members of the committee, my name is Vianne, and I am a student at an Ohio university. I am deeply concerned about Senate Bill 1 and its impact on my education and future career.

This bill limits the ability of faculty to foster open discussions in the classroom by imposing vague restrictions on teaching controversial topics. As a student, I want to be challenged. I want to engage with difficult subjects and hear diverse perspectives. While completing my degree in Ohio, I have had the opportunity to learn from people who are different from me and bring unique points of view. This bill also removes DEI initiatives, which have been instrumental in supporting students from different backgrounds, ensuring that we all have an equal opportunity to succeed. Throughout my education, I have been lucky to be a part of programs established by DEI initiatives. They have been welcoming to anyone from any political party and made me feel more welcome at my school. Without these programs, Ohio risks alienating students from underrepresented communities, discouraging them from attending our state's institutions. I fear that this bill will diminish the value of my degree, making Ohio universities less competitive nationally. I want to stay in Ohio, but the passage of this bill would make me unwelcome here. 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. I love Ohio and I want to make it a great place to live and learn. Therefore, I urge you to reject this bill and prioritize policies that enhance—not restrict—our education.