

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify. My name is Matina Bliss. I am resident in Columbus, Ohio and attended Ohio State University to obtain my undergraduate degree. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

Every aspect of this bill is concerning to me as a community member, taxpayer, former student, and education advocate. More specifically, this bill's intention to censor educators and curriculum while also dissolving DEI programs and initiatives is extremely dangerous and does a disservice to our students and communities. There's a reason Ohio communities fought so hard against SB 83 during the last General Assembly. The recycling of a vastly unpopular, discriminatory, and destructive bill is disingenuous. Ohioans deserve better.

Speaking as a former student, if this bill had been law when I was considering universities, I would have opted to attend a university in another state as SB 1 is the antithesis of the freedom to learn. Speaking as a professional in educational spaces across the state, this bill, if passed, will harm Ohio. We will lose students; they will seek out higher education in different states. We will lose educators; our quality faculty members and aspiring professors will seek out job opportunities in other states. Our economy will suffer; we will lose talent and jobs to other states.

I ask you to consider my testimony and listen to the thousands of students, educators, and community members that oppose this bill. Please vote NO on this destructive and discriminatory bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testify.

Matina Bliss