

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 Charlotte Melville. I am a second-year student at Miami University and an Ohio native. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

As a student, one of the aspects that I find most valuable is the ability to have open and honest conversations. Having these conversations in the classroom help students learn how to navigate conflict and differences of opinions naturally, without government intervention. I trust my professors to thoughtfully introduce controversial topics and to give a variety of perspectives consideration because that is what higher education is for; learning how to navigate conflicting opinions and using them to inform your own opinion. What makes the university experience so fruitful when compared to high school is the freedom to explore topics that are typically side-stepped in high school. I fear that SB1 does not encourage intellectual diversity, but actually kills it.

This bill is trying to solve issues in education that simply don't exist. Banning DEI related programs will not solve anything. Forcing universities to get rid of smaller degree programs doesn't solve anything. Banning our faculty from striking doesn't solve anything.

As an aspiring academic, if SB1 is passed, I would have serious reservations about continuing my studies and teaching in Ohio. I have lived in Ohio my whole life and I truly love it here. Ohio has been good to me and given me an excellent education, something I would like to give back, but this bill puts unnecessary burdens on professors by controlling what are acceptable topics for the classroom and on their employment. Please keep universities as a venue for free thought and expression.

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

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.