

Chairman, members of the committee, my name is Keara, and I am a double major in Psychology and Educational Policy at Miami University. I strongly oppose Senate Bill 1 because, if passed, it will have substantial negative effects on the future of higher education in Ohio. As an out-of-state student, I would never have considered enrolling here had laws like this been in place. SB 1 will not only discourage students from attending college in Ohio but will also diminish the quality of education they receive.

I am particularly concerned about provisions that would prohibit trainings and discussions on systemic racism. As a white woman from an upper-class family, I initially felt uncomfortable when I first learned about concepts like generational wealth and segregation. But discomfort is essential to growth. It is well understood that intellectual and personal development come from having one's perspectives challenged.

At no point in my education was I made to feel personally responsible for racism or discrimination. Instead, I was given the opportunity to understand how systemic injustice has persisted in this country and to decide for myself how to engage with the fight for equality. Systemic racism exists whether we discuss it or not, and college is a place to learn about the realities of the world. Critical thinking develops through the introduction of new ideas and the tension between them and our preexisting beliefs.

Students have the responsibility to form their own perspectives, but they also have the right to access a full and uncensored education. This includes learning about historical events such as slavery, the Holocaust, and the Jim Crow era. Censoring these topics is an attack on both freedom of speech and the fundamental right to knowledge—rights that should be protected for all citizens.

I urge you to oppose Senate Bill 1 to protect the integrity of higher education in Ohio.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.