

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

Thank you for letting me testify. My name is Sharon Heinrich. I graduated from The Ohio State University with a Bachelor's Degree in English. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6 because I understand:

- The power of language.
- The power of controlling what materials teachers can use and what students can learn about.
- That where we can go in life correlates to what we see as possible; who sees our resume and weighs our value.

SB 1 stops discussion of all groups and topics it can lump into diversity. Or equity. Or inclusion. SB 1 stunts discussions when they would let people learn to look critically at whose stories are told. That's primarily the story of who holds power. Those in power tell the story through their lens. This is not critical race theory. This is not condemnation of who other people are. I think of Eleanor Roosevelt: "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."

With SB 1, what happens to academic programs like Black Studies? Women's Studies? LGBTQIA Studies? Jewish Studies? The very courses that help students learn about the voices so often omitted from the texts I read in my K-12 education and in my college education. That help students learn other voices have merit.

What happens to campus organizations supporting folks under-represented in programs of study so that they have a supportive community that sees their value? Each of those, SB 1 can say goes away because they are "DEI." It means that instructors cannot include in their syllabi any book that focuses on a topic that anyone can say is about Diversity. Or equity. Or inclusion.

Does SB 1 prevent employees from learning, in their own time, about topics that fall under DEI? So if they wanted to read about the Tuskegee Airmen, would they get written up? How would an instructor know if they could put the Tuskegee Airmen in their syllabus without being written up for DEI violations? Or if a student asked about the Tuskegee Airmen, could the instructor and class talk about it then? Or is the instructor risking being evaluated as "talking about DEI"?

Mr. Dent, in his opinion, calls out times that The Ohio State University search committees put extra effort into bringing three black candidates for French Studies. He omits that the position was "with a specialization in black France." He calls out that a position was Indigenous studies and OSU's celebration that they found "three fantastic Native women

candidates.” He left out that it was for the Department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. He left out that each candidate was active within her tribe. He left out how many resumes received serious consideration *before* the panel narrowed the decision to three candidates for each position.

Perhaps the search committees looked at equal resumes. But these candidates possessed qualities other candidates did not: an understanding from the lens that matched their courses’ content. He is correct that discrimination exists if the search panel round 1 of serious consideration excluded white and male candidates with equal resumes. What if the course had been about geriatric white male sexual dysfunction? Would diversity bias exist if the university’s slate of candidates looked at 2 women and 8 men with equal resumes, but the panel narrowed the final pool of 3 where each was a geriatric white man?

DEI as a concept doesn’t mean the female, or the black male, or any other group in the minority gets the job over a white male to fit a quota. It says that everyone with the same qualifications gets the same score. It does not mean that the candidate in a minority group automatically gets the job over a white man.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote **no** on this bill that limits universities from all things diversity, equity, and inclusion. That limits the content students can learn about.

Thanks for accepting this written testimony.