

Testimony of M.S. René Castillo, Current PhD Student Before the Senate Higher Education Committee Senator Kristina Roegner, Chair February 10, 2025  
Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingram, and Members of the Higher

Education Committee:

My name is René Castillo, and I am a PhD Student of Geology at The Ohio State University. I do not represent The Ohio State University but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 1.

I oppose Senate Bill 1 because it undermines academic freedom, silences essential discussions on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and imposes vague restrictions on intellectual discourse that threaten higher education in Ohio. Banning DEI efforts and restricting faculty rights, including striking and tenure protections, will weaken our institutions, drive talent away, and limit opportunities for students from underrepresented backgrounds. Ohio's universities should foster open inquiry and academic excellence, not be subjected to political overreach that jeopardizes funding, faculty autonomy, student learning, and student growth.