

My name is Grace Goodin and I am a junior at Kent State. As a public university student in Ohio, if Senate Bill 1 passes my education would be severely negatively impacted. I love going to school in Ohio, being close to home has been important to me. But if this bill gets passed I would not recommend public Ohio universities to anyone, let alone reapply for a graduate degree in Ohio.

A university or any school setting is meant to be safe and welcoming to all students. However SB1 prohibits institutions from opposing any controversial belief. This would make classrooms a place for extremist hate, creating fear and discomfort in students. I would not feel comfortable in a class where holocaust deniers and other extremists are free to express their hateful ideology. I have spoken with upwards of 15 classmates and they all shared the same sentiment. This is not just a hypothetical. At Kent State there have been hate crimes committed against the Jewish community. In May of 2022 someone painted a swastika on campus. We cannot offer a platform for this dangerous rhetoric.

Furthermore, being on a diverse campus is important to me because it widens my worldview and gives me the opportunity to connect with those who come from different cultures and backgrounds. Coming from a smaller town, I did not know much about different traditions, values and beliefs from other cultures. This limited my understanding of the world and my ability to connect with different people. Coming to Kent State, I have met so many students from different cultures and financial backgrounds. This has enriched my experience and made Kent State an amazing university to attend. The programs and scholarships that make such a diverse campus possible will be under attack if SB1 passes.

Student Accessibility Services (SAS), has made my education possible. However it could be so impacted by the new laws SB1 proposes that it could be forced to shut down. I have struggled with an eating disorder for years in and out of inpatient programs. Balancing classes and recovery has not been easy. However SAS has provided me with extremely necessary accommodations that have helped me to stay in school while recovering. Without SAS students like me with any mental illness or disability will be much less likely to succeed in college. This will be a major deterrent for prospective students interested in going to a public University in Ohio. There are so many students who need accommodations and will have to go to other states universities in order to get them.

SB1 would devastate the public university students and faculty in Ohio. I ask you to consider my testimony and vote no on this incredibly harmful bill.