

February 10, 2025

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

As a concerned citizen and business owner, I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 1.

I recognize the importance of having people of different backgrounds and experiences in the room when making decisions. There are many times when those viewpoints were critical in helping our team factor how our decisions would impact people with a different background than myself and helped reveal blind spots in my thinking. I feel this is doubly important in a learning environment such as university. The entire point of the college experience is to expand your horizons and gain new perspectives.

Without intentional thought and effort, it's human nature to identify with and support people who are similar - you see a bit of them in yourself. Without DEI programs and the ability to have these types of conversations in a classroom, I fear that over time people in power will continue to promote and push for the hiring and advancement of others that are most similar to themselves. Not only does this prevent other deserving students and faculty from joining the conversation, it also stunts the growth and smart decision making of everyone associated with the university or business.

I am strongly opposed to Senate Bill 1 and encourage you to vote NO. Not only does it weaken educational discourse and decision making, it leads to a less equitable and empathetic society.

Sincerely,

Ryan Forquer