

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Sydney Jones, I am an Ohio resident and higher education staff member.

I am strongly opposed to Senate Bill 1 and its companion bill HB6. SB1 threatens the integrity and legacy of higher education in Ohio.

By removing DEI policies, training, and funding we are removing opportunities from some of the best and brightest talents to attend Ohio schools. Ohio State is ranked #15 in US Public Universities, Ohio State won the football national championship; all eyes are on our state. These are points of pride for the members of this committee. This bill will discourage student athletes, non-traditional students, Appalachian students, veterans, black students, and women in STEM - just to name a few, from attending our Ohio public schools.

I am also concerned that Senate Bill 1 defines controversial belief or policy as “any belief or policy that is the subject of political controversy, including issues such as climate policies, electoral politics, foreign policy, diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, immigration policy, marriage, or abortion.”

This bill states that all students should “reach their own conclusions”, which has always been the case. Students have always had the freedom to think and believe what they want. Faculty have no method of changing the thoughts in students' brains by machine. Faculty are simply asking students to listen to others, use critical thinking, research, and facts to support their beliefs. This bill is asking for faculty to not do what they are trained to do, which is educate the future of America about the realities of the world.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this bill that is destructive to the State of Ohio.

Thank you,

Sydney Jones