

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Collin Brice. I am a speech-language pathologist and a PhD student at the University of Cincinnati. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

I had the privilege of attending a K-12 Christian private school where I learned how to lead worship, a skill I still use at my church in Cincinnati. Years later, I discovered that my co-worship leader had been sexually trafficked and abused by our teacher. Over a decade later, she still hasn't shown me the burn marks left on her skin, but I know the powerful people who put them there.

I share this story because what happened next matters: she got help. While I believe faith and friendship played a role, a key factor was the expertise of health professionals trained in women's mental health—specialists who relied on education and research that targeted vulnerable, underrepresented, underprivileged women. Yet, many of the words I just used are now being flagged by the NSF to justify defunding due to its allusions to diversity, and equity, and inclusion.

As a PhD candidate, I am trained to be precise. If I propose a study on diverse participants, I must specify—do I mean race, socioeconomic status, age, height, neurodiversity, dialect, or religion? Without clarity, my proposal would be immediately rejected. Yet, in recent political discourse, diversity is muddled to ignore the true breadth of representation—including all of us.

Through my university's community engagement certificate, I've seen the real impact of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts and how research interests start at the education level. Let me tell you what this bill will dismantle: efforts to reduce Black infant and maternal mortality in Ohio, efforts to improve literacy in bilingual children, and to deliver special education services to rural areas. This bill as it stands will cause fear and help dismantle America's health research which historically is the envy of the world.

Benjamin Franklin once said, Freedom of speech is a principal pillar of a free government; when this support is taken away the constitution of a free society is dissolved, and tyranny is erected on its ruins. SB.1 is not a bill for integrity; it is a bill for control. It stifles education, innovation, and economic growth. It is anti-freedom, anti-capitalism, and will have deadly consequences. For these reasons, I ask you to vote no on this radical bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify

I will take any questions you may have.