

Chairman, members of the committee, my name is Luca James Katch, and I am currently a sophomore at an Oberlin College. I am testifying against Senate Bill 1 as a student who is seriously considering transferring to a school out of Ohio due to the political pressures put on universities. I know many of my classmates feel the same.

It is hard to see a future for myself in Ohio when it seems that the state is not interested in fostering a forward-thinking, inclusive and academically rigorous environment. Instead I feel that I am being pressured out of the state by bills like this, which threaten the free speech of myself and the professors I respect so much. Instead of allowing universities to make their own decisions about curriculum and campus policies, Senate Bill 1 imposes political oversight that will stifle learning and deter top faculty from staying. I fear we will lose our best professors and our most forward thinking students. The limits put on DEI and education threaten my safety as a student who benefits from these initiatives. I cannot remain in a state that does not care about my safety.

If this bill passes, it will make Ohio less attractive to students, graduates, and employers alike. I urge this committee to consider the long-term consequences of this legislation and vote no on Senate Bill 1.