

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 Dr. Elizabeth R. Barker. I am a Professor of Clinical Nursing (emerita) who has been actively practicing and teaching for the last 20 years. I am also a 36 year Veteran of the United States Navy. I am most strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

This bill is dangerous on two fronts. First, in the education of students at the Universities, the main job of professors is to teach students how to employ critical thinking skills. This can only be accomplished if all sides of an issue are presented and debated. To prevent the teaching of so called “wok” theories denies students the right to intellectual growth. Second, it is strongly supported by research that healthcare providers of a similar culture to patients produce the best outcomes for patients. Often, some members of specific cultures need to have special consideration for admittance to programs. If our graduates are of homogenous background, then we have not done our job to provide healthcare professionals who will work to raise the level of health care that all deserve.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this incredibly harmful bill. Be brave and do not conform to a political ideology that is dangerous and divisive.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.