

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

Thank you for allowing me to submit my written testimony. My name is Cara I am a proud graduate of Miami University. I was born and raised outside of Dayton, I currently live and work in Columbus, and will be starting law school at The Ohio State University in the fall. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

When I arrived at Miami, I did not exactly know what I wanted to do with my life. Fortunately, Miami instructs all students to take “Miami Plan” classes, which are courses from a wide breadth of disciplines to take outside of your core major classes. Although I worked hard to graduate with two majors and a minor, my Miami Plan courses were some of the most enriching and impactful courses I have taken during my time in school. I took classes on African religions, learned about women’s history in Afghanistan and Algeria, studied educational leadership approaches, and analyzed pseudoscientific theories. The role these courses, and the peers with whom I shared them, played in my life have reach far beyond the classroom, and I cannot imagine higher education any other way.

This bill, however, threatens future students from benefitting from their higher education in ways that should be accessible to them. Intellectual diversity is a necessary thing in higher education to make new discoveries and have meaningful conversations. While I fully agree that not all subjects are objective and cannot be studied in a black-and-white manner, I do not agree with what this bill will do to classrooms. It invites racist, bigoted, and xenophobic views without repercussions. Hiding behind the term “controversial beliefs” to allow those views is embarrassing and the rest of the country and world will feel the same. How do you expect people to want to attend school in our great state when their identities are being threatened, and their school abandons their protections? We will lose out on shaping the greatest minds and if you want that for us, you are not a fair representative.

I am equally disheartened by the measures to cut DEI and faculty rights. DEI is not the buzzword that you may think it is. It also means non-traditional students, veterans, first-generation college students, and so much more. Would you like to cut off their access to higher education in Ohio as well? Students will not want to or will be unable to attend here. In addition to students, educators are greatly affected by this bill. Beyond the idea that their fields could be censored and restricted, the restrictions on their collective bargaining and striking is reprehensible. Where will the restrictions be drawn? Will this set precedent to cut workers’ rights in all professions? It is cowardly to attempt to write this into Ohio law and I am ashamed as both a former student, future graduate student. and an Ohioan.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this dangerous bill.
Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.