

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 Allison Schulten. I am a registered pediatric oncology nurse in Cincinnati and have been for the last 17 years. I have 2 young and impressionable sons in grade school. I am strongly opposed to Senate Bill 1 and its companion bill HR 6.

As a healthcare professional, I have witnessed firsthand the importance of understanding and respecting diverse backgrounds and perspectives. I care for children and families from various cultural, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The ability to empathize and connect with them is crucial in providing safe and effective care. I gained this empathy and understanding during my college years, where exposure to diverse viewpoints was essential to my education.

Senate Bill 1 and HR 6 threaten to undermine this critical aspect of higher education. By prohibiting discussions on controversial topics, these bills limit students' exposure to different perspectives and hinder their ability to develop critical thinking skills. Universities should be places where students are challenged to think deeply, question assumptions, and engage in meaningful dialogue with those who have different views. If everyone shares the same view, there is no critical thinking. Group think takes over where critical evaluation and independent thought are suppressed. The future workforce would lose the ability to develop well rounded opinions.

As a mother, I want my sons to grow up in a society that values diversity and encourages open dialogue. I want them to learn to think critically, to understand and appreciate different perspectives, and to become compassionate, informed citizens. Senate Bill 1 and HR 6 jeopardize these values by promoting a more restrictive and less inclusive educational environment. As a parent, I do not have the right to stifle my child's learning into adulthood. All parents want their children to do better than them. SB1 will take Ohio backwards and our youth along with it.

In conclusion, I urge you to consider the long-term effects of these bills. We must strive to create educational institutions that prepare students for a diverse and interconnected world rather than separate us from it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Allison Schulten". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Allison Schulten RN