

Testimony of Jessica Prewitt, Au.D., CCC-A, CH-TM, CH-AP  
Before the Senate Higher Education Committee  
Senator Kristina Roegner, Chair  
February 7, 2025

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingram, and Members of the Higher Education Committee:

My name is Dr. Jessica Prewitt and I am a proud alumni of Bowling Green State University (class of 2007) and Ohio University (class of 2011). I am currently an Assistant Professor at the University of Cincinnati. I do not represent the University of Cincinnati but rather I am submitting testimony as a private citizen. I was educated in the state of Ohio and currently participate in educating the next generation of Audiology students in Ohio. I am a proud Ohioan writing to extend my deep concern with SB1 and I ask that you do not pass SB1

SB1 is an unfunded bill that will put unnecessary costs on the local Universities and Colleges in Ohio. These costs will affect students, faculty and the institutions' abilities to provide programs for the communities they call home.

Our ability to attract quality faculty and researchers to Ohio will be negatively affected if SB1 passes. We are likely to lose quality researchers due to the unnecessary regulations proposed by SB1. That is not good for Ohio or Ohio's students.

The bill threatens quality education by mandating what must be included in higher education courses. Politicians should not be mandating higher education and endangering quality education.

DEI efforts are important to help students feel they belong and are welcome in the higher education space. When students feel safe, they perform at their best. Positively, DEI efforts have led to a more diverse student body across the state of Ohio. We all benefit from an educated society, no matter where you are from!

Healthcare has health inequities as documented by research. As a professor in healthcare we know that uptake with health recommendations increases when the healthcare professional looks like the patient or is culturally competent. If we can increase healthcare uptake, we can save money in healthcare. DEI initiatives are not a waste or a threat, with care and support, they can change outcomes for thousands of Ohioans!

In closing, I am a strong opponent of SB1 and ask that you do the same. For the sake of protecting quality higher education and critical thinking everywhere, SB1 cannot pass.