

Honorable 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 Alissa Friedman, and I live here in Columbus. I am a retired nonprofit CEO who also had careers as a web developer and as a lawyer. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

As I reviewed the provisions of SB1, the first thing that went through my head was just how much overhead and administration its provisions were going to add to our higher education system. There are so many policies to draft and revise every five years. There are so many processes to institute to allow for complaints and investigations. Regulating university administrators in this way will also require significantly more oversight from the state government. I object to this wasteful deployment of government and educational resources.

I also object to specific provisions in the bill, including the one covering “controversial beliefs or policies.” I appreciate what I take to be the impulse: allow free debate; forbid subjecting students to political litmus tests. But the language “attempt to indoctrinate” is dangerously vague and broad. If I am teaching a constitutional law class and state that the Equal Protection Clause forbids making laws that discriminate on the basis of race unless necessary for a compelling state interest, am I indoctrinating my students? I’m sure you could find people who disagree, so does that make it controversial? **Everything** is controversial to **someone**, even when there is broad consensus in a field.

My parents both taught at The Ohio State University. My mom, who passed away in 2021, published a paper about Mathematics and the Gender Gap, a meta-analysis of other studies, concluding that average sex differences were small and that sex differences in performance were decreasing over the years. Would she have needed to look over her shoulder, worried that some student would file a complaint that she was “indoctrinating” them? Might the subject matter itself be construed as improperly promoting DEI? This is no way to promote academic freedom.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify,

Alissa Friedman, Columbus