

Testimony of Kelly Molloy, BA, Clinical Psychology PhD Graduate Student
Before the Senate Higher Education Committee
Senator Kristina Roegner, Chair
February 10, 2025

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

My name is Kelly Molloy, and I am a first-year graduate student of Psychology at the University of Cincinnati. I do not represent the University of Cincinnati but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 1.

As a student early in my doctoral program, I am extremely concerned about Senate Bill 1's proposal to prohibit and eliminate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) courses, scholarships, offices, and departments (in Section 23345.0217). This ban would threaten the very "intellectual diversity" that the bill claims to promote. Prohibiting DEI programs and education will be devastating to students receiving higher education. Those who receive DEI scholarships will no longer receive compensation to continue their education, which would cause already limited diversity within universities to diminish further; again, preventing true intellectual diversity within the classroom. Those who work in DEI offices and departments will be left without a job. Additionally, I am currently receiving a degree that requires students to take a diversity, equity and inclusion class in order to be fully accredited. This bill would prevent such a class from existing, thus threatening the future of my professional career, as well as the careers of my peers and students in other graduate programs. Similarly, several research grants that I work on with individuals in my community will likely not be funded with these restrictions as most of us aim to research underserved, diverse communities. Prohibition of DEI programs will be incredibly detrimental to so many individuals receiving higher education in the state of Ohio.

I am also opposed to Senate Bill 1's proposal to revoke voting power from student members on universities' Board of Trustees. As the representatives of students receiving education at each institution, it is imperative to consider student members' perspectives and consider their votes. Without doing so, students will be unheard and unhappy, which could lead to higher dropout rates and less people finishing their degree. This proposal in the bill would lead to nothing good; in fact, it would once again go against the "intellectual diversity" that it proposes is necessary. Without considering student members' votes, multiple and divergent perspectives would not be considered.

As a young woman early in her professional career and higher educational journey, please consider these concerns and the similar perspectives of my peers, colleagues, and mentors.

Thank you.