

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 Anna Bergholtz, I am a Graduate Student at the University of Cincinnati, I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

As a student, educator, young woman and future mother, I plead you to consider the detrimental implications of this bill. Education and intellectual thought thrive on diversity, and the space of higher education to challenge modes of thought is as old as the institution itself. We need students and educators to feel safe to think outside the box in order to drive positive change as well as to develop critical thinkers in America. If students are not allowed to be exposed to diversity, what will they do in the workforce?

As a Graduate Student, I can tell you firsthand that so much of the value of my education has been through diversity of my peers and exposure to the world as complex. If all my classmates had the same background as me, I wouldn't have learned half as much. As someone who is privileged, I know I am blessed, and I believe that others should get the same chances that I have gotten. There are so many incredible thinkers, workers, and leaders that would never get the chance if not for DEI initiatives, and it pains me and the education system as a whole to disregard these facts.

For everyone with children, or who plans to have children in the future, this bill is terrifying and very disappointing. Please do not pass this bill for the sake of the people and the future that this bill takes away from. Thank you.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this extreme, destructive bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.