

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Higher Education Committee,

I am writing to testify against the SB 1 bill and its companion bill HB 6, as I am strongly opposed to these. My name is Lily McHenry, and I am an English: Creative Writing and Film Studies student at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

I decided to pursue a higher education and come to Miami University in particular to foster a greater knowledge of those from backgrounds and communities that differ from my own. I chose this school in particular because I was promised a rounded education that dove into a multitude of topics that help me foster a better understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and how I can incorporate these practices and beliefs into my future creative career as a writer and worker in the film industry. As of 2022, almost 93 billion dollars were produced in the U.S. from the film industry alone (U.S. Census Bureau). Many of these films include an investment of diversity, equity, and inclusion, by including characters and crew members of all different races, religions, abilities, etc. If DEI services were not provided at Miami University, I would have a lack of experience in working with people of diverse backgrounds, and incorporating these practices into film and writing. As many films operate with these values in mind, the U.S. film industry will suffer due to the lack of knowledge from upcoming generations about these topics.

Work and everyday life involves encountering and communicating with people from other countries, social statuses, etc. If DEI programs were to be taken away, me and other students of a similar age to me would not have the knowledge to be able to address these differences and interact with them in a classroom setting—and later, in a work setting. International relations are vital to keeping our country strong and to ensure we have trusted allies. From talking to and interacting with international students and faculty, I have learned virtues and values that are vital to me as an American citizen—cultural differences, other languages, and overall learning how to interact with others from different places. Taking away DEI programs and limiting students' knowledge on important topics about other cultures, historical events, etc. will cause international communication, and therefore the foundations of our country, to suffer.

I can say for certain that if not for DEI programs and an inclusive education, I would not have studied in Miami University, nor the state of Ohio in general, if this bill had been implemented, and I would seriously reconsider my possibility to get a degree in the state of Ohio if this bill were to be passed in the future.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Lily McHenry