

February 8, 2025

To 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 Kristina English, PhD. I am a professor emeritus from the University of Akron, specializing in the healthcare field of audiology, and have been training students in the assessment and treatment of hearing loss and balance problems for 30 years.

I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6. Passing these bills would have a direct and drastic negative impact on hundreds of healthcare training programs in Ohio's universities and colleges. These programs are accredited by national organizations to assure the public that graduating students have satisfied all professional standards.

These standards include satisfactorily completing required coursework in diversity, equity, and inclusion content, which has been developed in response to overwhelming evidence of unequal health care for persons of color, persons identifying as LGBTQ+, persons with disabilities, of unfamiliar religions, and more. This concern was first brought to accrediting bodies' attention with the publication of the Institute of Medicine report, *Unequal treatment: Confronting racial and ethnic disparities in health care* (2003) (<https://www.nap.edu/download/12875>), and is now a pillar of the accreditation process.

If this course content is prohibited as proposed by SB 1 and H 6, the consequence will be catastrophic: when Ohio's programs are scheduled for review, accrediting bodies will place them on probation and ultimately shut them down. This is not a negotiable situation: programs meet the established standards or they are shuttered. Think of the consequences: no graduates from Ohio's medical schools, nursing programs, dentistry, physical therapy, speech-language therapy, audiology, occupational therapy, social work, counseling.... This simply cannot be allowed to happen.

I ask you to please listen to and consider my testimony and vote NO on this extremist bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.