

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Aiden Everhart. I am a Junior at the University of Cincinnati studying political science. As a student who will be directly affected by the policies it proposes, I am opposed to Senate Bill 1, and its companion House Bill 6.

The state of Ohio benefits from the strength and well-being of its higher education institutions. Many of you would agree that high-quality universities with skilled faculty positively impact Ohio's economy, attract business, and create jobs. However, this bill will likely jeopardize these institutions.

The proposals in this bill, particularly those that ban diversity, equity, and inclusion programs and offices, would legally prohibit scholarships for first-generation students, racial and ethnic minorities, and any other underrepresented groups. If Ohioans who fit these categories cannot receive these sorts of scholarships in Ohio, many will seek an out-of-state education instead.

They will not be the only ones to abandon the Ohio higher education system because of this bill. Under the restrictions that are being proposed, faculty's rights to collectively bargain will be severely reduced and prevent the possibility of tenure. Similarly, they will see increased restrictions on their curriculum as the bill requires neutrality that, despite sounding appealing in theory, is beyond impractical in practice. The bill will force educators to teach inaccurate conspiracy theories about voter fraud while discussing election results, mandate discussions about flat-earth theory while teaching science, and subject medical students to debunked claims that vaccines alter your DNA. What will faculty do in response to this change in curriculum? They will leave.

If the removal of scholarship programs isn't enough to deter some students from attending school in Ohio, a less qualified, and certainly less enthusiastic faculty certainly will.

Again I remind you, the success of the state of Ohio as a whole is contingent upon the success of its Universities. Those who vote in support of this bill are voting against the success of our schools, and as a result, the wellbeing of Ohio altogether. I ask you to consider this and vote NO on this extremely irresponsible bill. I will now take any questions you may have.