

February 8, 2025

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 Tammy Calhoun. I am a concerned citizen and a nontraditional college student. I strongly oppose SB 1 and its companion bill, HB 6, because they would have devastating consequences for Ohio's public colleges and universities, harming students, faculty, and the state's economy.

SB 1 would restrict the teaching of topics such as systemic racism, gender studies, and other subjects deemed "controversial." It would also ban most diversity programs, eliminate tenure, and weaken workers' rights. These provisions would damage Ohio's reputation as a leader in higher education, pushing students and faculty toward institutions in other states that value academic freedom. Our universities cannot afford to lose top talent, yet this bill makes that inevitable.

Research from the American Council on Education shows that diversity programs improve student engagement, retention, and graduation rates. States that have passed similar restrictive policies have seen declines in enrollment and faculty retention, weakening their higher education systems and economies. Ohio cannot afford to follow this path.

I urge you to reject SB 1 and HB 6 to protect Ohio's students, educators, and economic future.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Tammy Calhoun

Source:

American Council on Education, "ACE Releases Paper Exploring Intersection Between College Instruction and Student Outcomes," 2023