

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify. My name is Emily Parsons, MSW, RA. I am a lifelong resident of Ohio, with a Masters in Social Work from The Ohio State University, with a concentration in Community and Social Justice. I am also a Registered Advocate with Senior Standing with the Ohio Advocate Network. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

My career has been focused on victim advocacy, education, and community outreach. I have worked with numerous populations since entering the workforce such as: immigrants, black and brown individuals, LGBT+ individuals, low-income families, individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities, college students, youth, women, and men. Every person has their own story and challenges. As a Victim Advocate, I worked with people during their most vulnerable time. Listening to people's stories gave me the understanding that every victim/survivor is different and has different needs. Some have experienced generational abuse and trauma, others came from stable family environments. The Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) study shows that children who experience multiple victimizations, from neglect, abuse, and exposure to violence, have higher chances of experiencing significant risk factors as adults. These risk factors include: smoking, depression, anxiety, substance use, unwanted pregnancies, and health diseases (Felitti VJ. The Relation Between Adverse Childhood Experiences and Adult Health: Turning Gold into Lead. *Perm J*. 2002 Winter;6(1):44-47. doi: 10.7812/TPP/02.994. PMID: 30313011; PMCID: PMC6220625.) The ACE study helps to understand why adults react to trauma in various ways depending on their childhood experiences, cultural background, and upbringing.

Trauma does not exist in a vacuum, rather is exacerbated by conditions of our society through systemic oppression, explicit racism, sexism, and classism. Systems have been created to uplift those in power, and keep marginalized communities from succeeding. Generational poverty and trauma stems from this lack of opportunity and discrimination. Diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility seeks to address systematic oppression and level the playing field. We should not fear equity, rather embrace the differences we all have as individuals. I believe our education system thrives under DEI. We cannot learn from the past and improve on our future without a fundamental understanding of our history.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Emily Parsons, MSW, RA