

Testimony of Ambrosia Havan, B.S., PhD student
Before the Senate Higher Education Committee
Senator Kristina Roegner, Chair
February 8, 2025

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingram, and Members of the Higher Education Committee:

My name is Ambrosia Havan, and I am a graduate student of Plant Pathology at The Ohio State University, where I studied in some capacity for 7 years. I do not represent Ohio State, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 1.

Outlawing diversity, equity, and inclusion departments and offices will do nothing to promote "intellectual diversity" and will not address the then severe equity and inclusion deficits that exist. As someone with disabilities, things such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is an effort of inclusion, rooted in DEI beliefs. By trying to eliminate DEI programs, the sponsor of this bill is directly saying that they would like to stop including people like me in spaces, conversations, and higher education, as our presence would no longer be protected.

I have had the honor to be educated at a prestigious university like Ohio State, and part of what makes it so prestigious is the ability for professors to communicate and educate students in the ways they seem fit. This bill's list of "controversial topics" that should be taught in a limited capacity is a dramatic overreach and is in antithesis of the bill's supposed promotion of "intellectual diversity". How can you promote intellectual diversity while stifling the professors' ability to teach? It makes no sense.

This bill is an attack on education by a sponsor who has never taught at a higher education institution, and who has not been in school for decades. The attitude on university campuses is not an exclusionary one that refuses to listen to conservative voices. Freedom of speech is alive and well, but that does not mean students have to listen to viewpoints they don't agree with. No one is prevented from dropping classes if they don't like professors or their teaching methods, and no one is prevented from coming onto campus to communicate their ideals. Attempting to force an increase in "diversity" onto campuses by intentionally removing protections that are promoted in diversity, equity, and inclusion practices only stands to show that the sponsors of this bill want to promote only *their* views.

This bill, and this fight to damage our access to education, is not just government overreach, it is also a failure for our government to work on meaningful issues that are currently impacting our citizens.

Please consider my testimony and vote NO on Senate Bill 1.