

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 Jasmine Duran. I am an instructor in higher education with experience as a research psychologist with a background in cognitive psychology. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

I am concerned that the goals and details of the proposed bill are disingenuous due to their incoherent nature. As just one example, SB1 seeks to “affirm and declare that the institution will ensure full intellectual diversity,” yet prohibits all efforts (training, offices, departments, promotion of admission and hiring) to promote the attraction and sustainment of diverse peoples on campus. This leads to the conclusion that the goal is not actually to promote intellectual diversity but restrict what can be taught in higher education classrooms. This is concerning as it appears to be a thinly veiled attempt to manufacture an issue and turn higher education campuses into another battlefield fought through political lenses, rather than facts, evidence, or scientific consensus.

The second concern I have is the needless oversight that this bill imposes on “controversial beliefs or policies.” Faculty teaching in higher education have dedicated their lives to becoming experts in their respective fields of study. They seek to provide accurate accounts of the histories and current states in their fields based on evidence from domain-specific methods. If a student reaches the conclusion that the earth is flat, it is literally the job of the instructor to provide the consensus of evidence to the contrary, not to legitimize a misguided conclusion. It seems that this bill opens the door to tie the hands of faculty from providing information that has the most solid scientific support, without risking harassment or punishment from parties with purely political motives. This would make for an ineffective teaching and learning environment which would ultimately harm the quality of education for students.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this bill that does a deep disservice to both students, faculty, staff and administrators in higher education.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Jasmine Duran