

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 Amber Prater. I am a graduating medical doctor and public health professional. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

What is most concerning to me about this bill are the prohibitions, restrictions, and requirements put into place on institutions of higher education regarding race and sex. I would like to highlight ways in which abolishing these discussions will impact more than the controversial topics of gender and sexuality, critical race theory, disparities, prejudices, and biases.

Abolishing these types of conversations have a very real, tangible impact on topics such as women's health. I am not talking about abortion or reproductive rights; I mean *just* women's health generally. As a medical professional, it was shocking to me to learn early on in my education that we, as a society, did not have a strong foundation in many diseases that persist amongst only biologically female persons. Endometriosis – what causes it? We don't know exactly. How to you treat it? Well... birth control seems to help the symptoms, but not really the disease. Polycystic ovarian syndrome – what causes it? No idea. How do you treat it? Birth control? Again?

It wasn't until 1945 when women were allowed to have a voice in politics at all, brining about more access and equality for women. Then in the 1970s, the number of women physicians grew exponentially. This representation brought on discussions about gender, which SB1 seeks to abolish. These discussions prompted the inclusions of women in research in 1993 – just over 30 years ago. Despite this win, for hundreds, *hundreds*, of years, medical professionals were talking about the diseases and ailments of men's bodies. They found the cause and the treatment. Researched how medications impacted men's health. These delays in conversations about gender in medicine led to a delay in understanding about the female body – for which we are still impacted by today.

What I am trying to highlight is that the prohibitions and restrictions being put into place by SB1 could irreparably harm our communities. This could be in medicine – for example, without talking about race, our physicians would lack an understanding of how a red rash appears on different colored skin – or it could be in a different sector such as environmental health. No matter the way you look at it, this bill will hurt our schools, our students, and our communities.

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

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Amber Prater, MPH, CHES®