

February 9, 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 Amanda Fontana. I am a parent of a student who is currently enrolled at Bowling Green State University. I am a graduate of Stark State College, the University of Akron, and Cleveland State University. I have a Master of Social Work degree and am an adjunct Professor at Stark State College in the Human and Social Service program. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill, HB 6.

I am opposed to this bill because my children and I are perfect examples of how higher education can improve lives. You see, I was a high school dropout, teen mom, and troubled youth. I spent many years living in poverty with abuse, chaos, and turmoil. I was fortunate enough to survive the abuse, leave my abuser, get my GED, and enroll in classes at Stark State College. I was very limited in options because I had also obtained a criminal record during those years. However, the Human and Social Service field provided an opportunity for me. I started the program but had no faith in my ability to be successful, but my professors did. They poured into, educated, and mentored me until I could believe in myself. I had life experience in the areas where this bill would limit education, and those experiences, combined with the education I received, provided a way to turn those experiences into pathways to success.

As stated above, I was able to complete a Master's degree and become an educator in the Social Work field. I serve my community by volunteering on multiple boards and committees, and my community recently elected me to serve on our local Board of Education. For these reasons, I was able to move out of poverty, get off of public assistance, and provide my children with opportunities to advance in our society. Without those professors and my education, especially in the field of social work, none of that would have been possible! My family would have been just another statistic.

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

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Amanda Fontana