

Testimony of Elizabeth Lehman, Ph.D.  
Before the Senate Higher Education Committee  
Senator Kristina Roegner, Chair  
February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025

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

My name is Dr. Elizabeth Lehman, and I am a licensed psychologist at the University of Cincinnati (UC), where I have worked for 9 years in UC's Counseling and Psychological Services. The views I express here are my own and do not reflect the views of the University of Cincinnati.

I am in opposition to Senate Bill 1 due to the ways that I believe it will negatively impact the mental health of our college students, as well as the ways that it would affect our accreditation status as an American Psychological Association (APA) accredited training site for psychology interns.

I am lucky to work at a school that has students attending from many different identities, backgrounds, countries, and cultures. We are able to help so many different students learn and make a home for themselves here, partly because we recognize and honor the ways that students need to be able to have a place of connection and support. One of the places students have found that source of connection is in our identity centers, such as the African American Culture and Resource Center and our LGBTQ center, among others. By having a place to connect with students who have similar experiences, they are able to feel less alone, and support each other through their specific experiences, as well as work together to navigate the challenges of college.

These centers also support students' mental health, and help them to stay in school to obtain their degrees. We know that students often stay to work in the areas where they go to school, which is especially true of the University of Cincinnati and its strong co-op program. It is safe to assume that if students leave universities in Ohio due to lack of support, or choose not to attend Ohio universities in the first place, they will take their job skills and future jobs with them.

As someone who is highly involved in training psychology interns on their way to becoming psychologists in Ohio, I also have concerns about how SB 1 would impact our accreditation status from the American Psychological Association (APA). As an accredited site, we are required to train our psychology interns in "Individual and Cultural Diversity" as one of the nine required areas of competency. Furthermore, we are required to regularly provide evidence of this training and evidence of the ways that we are recruiting both interns and psychologists who prioritize an understanding of the ways that identities and cultures impact mental health. If SB 1

were to pass, we would not be able to maintain our accreditation status as a training site. The impact of that loss of accreditation is great. As an unaccredited site, we would not be able to competitively recruit interns or psychologists to work at our center. We would also have to hire psychologists to to replace the work that our interns provide (at a higher salary, of course), and it would be difficult to hire these psychologists, considering that we would have lost our training accreditation and would not be able to provide services according to our APA code of ethics.

For all of these reasons and more, I oppose SB 1 and the ways that it will negatively impact the mental health of students and our ability to train and recruit highly skilled psychologists in Ohio.

Please feel free to contact me with questions,

Dr. Elizabeth Lehman, Ph.D.