

Kristen Fontanini
3784 Arabian Ct
Columbus, OH 43221
kfont42@gmail.com

February 9, 2025

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate
Higher Education Committee
Ohio Senate

Subject: Opposition to SB 1

Dear Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate
Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony. My name is Kristen Fontanini, and I am a Senior Instructional Designer and LMS Administrator with a deep commitment to education, equity, and access to quality learning experiences. I am also a mother, a lifelong learner, and an advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill, HB 6.

As someone who designs and manages learning environments, I know firsthand how crucial it is for students to be exposed to diverse perspectives and inclusive curricula. SB 1 would strip Ohio's higher education institutions of their ability to foster critical thinking, cultural competency, and meaningful dialogue—skills that are essential in today's workforce and society. Eliminating DEI initiatives doesn't make education more 'neutral'; it simply ensures that marginalized voices are silenced. Research shows that workplaces and schools with strong DEI programs lead to better outcomes for everyone, including increased innovation, higher graduation rates, and stronger job placement.

Beyond my professional expertise, I worry about the message this bill sends to my children and future generations. Education should be about expanding minds, not restricting them. Censoring discussions around race, gender, and systemic inequities does not erase these realities—it only leaves students less prepared to navigate them in the real world.

I urge you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful bill. Ohio's students deserve an education that reflects the diversity and complexity of the world they will enter, not one constrained by political ideology.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kristen Fontanini