

February 9, 2025

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

Thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony on this important issue. My name is Katherine Kovalanka. I am a resident of Oxford, Ohio, and a Professor in the Department of Family Science and Social Work at Miami University. I am writing as an individual and not as a representative of my employer, and **I am strongly opposed to Senate Bill 1.**

I believe that SB1 is problematic for several reasons, but first and foremost, I am concerned for the undergraduate and graduate students in our social work degree programs. Our BSW and MSW students rely upon our department's excellent faculty and staff to provide them with the rigorous preparation needed to enter the workforce with the knowledge and skills required to be highly competent practitioners in their field. SB1 will hinder us from doing our jobs of ensuring that our students are able to meet the competencies put forth by our program's accrediting body, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)—especially those competencies that promote the goals shared in the United States' Pledge of Allegiance: "liberty and justice for all."

According to CSWE, the national association of social work education programs for the 800-plus accredited programs in the U.S. and its territories, the [purpose of the social work profession](#) is:

"To promote human and community well-being. Guided by... respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, the purpose of social work is actualized through its quest for social, racial, economic, and environmental justice; the creation of conditions that facilitate the realization of human rights; the elimination of poverty; and the enhancement of life for all people, locally and globally."

CSWE urges legislators, who are seeking to constrain how topics such as diversity are taught in colleges and universities and who will, perhaps inadvertently, negatively alter social work education, to "[consider the implications on accredited programs.](#)" CSWE's standards are not new. In fact, "requiring programs to achieve and maintain competency in the areas of diversity, privilege, oppression, and intersectionality has been central to social work accreditation standards [since 1952.](#)" Requiring our programs to alter our CSWE-approved curricula in response to SB1 could potentially jeopardize our accreditation status, thus **harming our students and their ability to achieve licensure and secure employment upon graduation.**

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful bill. Governor DeWine recognizes the [critical importance of social workers](#) to the health and well-being of our communities; please do not create barriers to us providing the best education possible to our students whose goals include serving the needs of your constituents. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Katherine A. Kovalanka
Oxford, OH