

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 Theodore Martin. I am an anti-money laundering (AML) operations investigator living in the state of Ohio. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

Throughout this bill there are various items that propose extremist ideas which would be to the detriment of our state and country. Some of the most egregious of these items fall within the section titled "diversity, equity, and inclusion, intellectual diversity, and other concepts." Allowing this section to pass would effectively block our ability to provide proper education and information regarding varying ideologies, cultures, backgrounds, and histories. While this section makes bold statements indicating that such education "indoctrinates" individuals to believe certain views, education on such topics involving diversity only serve to widen our view and understanding of this nation, its people, and the world that surrounds us. In contrast, what this bill is proposing is to enforce information control to conceal truths and histories that are imperative to our growth as a people and nation. Everyone should have a right to discuss their views, teach people history, and come to their own decisions and views after having obtained that knowledge. By limiting our freedoms to have such discussions we are stripping people of their ability to learn and come to their own determination on these matters.

On the surface, this bill states it is to promote equality, when, in actuality, it may very well eliminate our ability to achieve such goals. This country is built on diversity and equal opportunities but has had, and continues to have, its host of problems ensuring everyone is treated fairly. It is vital that we continue to allow diverse thoughts within the communities we live in, the schools we learn from, and the companies at which we work. By denying these rights, it is my fear that we will grow ignorant and complacent to the truths and plights faced by millions.

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

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.