

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 Jake Connelly. I am a medical laboratory technologist living in the Cuyahoga Falls area. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

I work at Summa Health on the Akron City Campus. As you probably know, we serve a diverse population with various needs for assistance. So I see it as part of my duty to see that the people of my community are healthy and safe. However, I believe that this bill would be to the direct detriment of not just my own, but all of our communities here in Ohio.

From my perspective, this bill seems to be dismantling the ability to teach students about historical accuracy and anything deemed “controversial” while also taking away protections for teachers and those who are more likely to be disenfranchised. Much of the language in the bill tries to make it appear as though it advocates for a sort of neutral argument. That no one should be discriminated against intrinsically for how they were born, or their opinions. However, it also seems to allow for any stance to be taken, including that of discrimination, against teachers and other students without culpability to the offending student, parent or any other outside instigator. The requirement for instructors to post their public information alongside their rubric online will lead to harassment and likely leave from the institution. All the while their protections will be dismantled.

This is a very dangerous precedent to be taking and will lead to increased societal tensions as well as an inability to tell accurate history and the very truth of our reality. What you are essentially proposing is that our kids should be hearing from both career long scientists as well as anti-vaccine conspiracy theorists and treating them both as if they had equal credibility. All in an attempt to supposedly prevent discrimination, but in reality what this bill is clearly attempting to do is eliminate and obfuscate any truths or accurate information. This can not be allowed to happen, not only for our state, but for our very nation.

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

Jake Connelly
Medical Laboratory Technologist
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