

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

My name is Angela Fry. I am a licensed independent social worker and a social work educator in the state of Ohio. I writing to oppose companion bills SB 1 & HB 6. This legislation says it is meant to enhance Ohio's higher education but instead, it threatens academic freedom by putting too much power into the hands of politicians.

Ohio is facing a critical behavioral health workforce shortage. Social workers fill many behavioral health positions. To become a social worker, one must attend a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited college or university. 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 (CSWE, 2022, para. 1). This bill would impact our profession and put us in direct opposition to our accrediting bodies and professional code of ethics. I believe this bill will reduce the number of people entering the profession thereby exacerbating the workforce shortage. The preamble to the National Association of Social Workers states, in part, "...Social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice" (NASW, 2021). Addressing systemic inequalities is necessary to provide services to the people of Ohio.

I urge you to oppose SB 1 & HB 6. This legislation harms students, faculty, and the integrity of higher education and puts the social work workforce at risk. Please stand for academic freedom and vote NO.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide my written testimony.

Sincerely,

*Angela Fry, MSW, LISW-S*

Angela Fry, MSW, LISW-S

References:

Council on Social Work Education. (2022). 2022 Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Information.

National Association of Social Workers. (2021). Read the Code of Ethics.

<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>