

Testimony of Nathan Squillante
Before the Senate Higher Education Committee
Senator Kristina Roegner, Chair
10 February 2025

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingram, and Members of the Senate Higher Education Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to testify. My name is Nathan Squillante. I am from Gahanna, Ohio, and I am currently a senior studying for my bachelor's degree in Sociology at the University of Cincinnati (I do not represent the University of Cincinnati).

Today I am testifying in **opposition** to Senate Bill 1 as a private citizen in solidarity with my fellow Ohioan students, educators, and citizens. As I understand this bill, it endorses the censorship of selective "controversial" topics for fear that they will promote sexism and/or racism.

I am a white man. Many of the topics studied in my sociology curriculum have included inequalities due to race and/or sex. Learning about racism and sexism from our nation's history and how these aspects manifest today has never made me feel that I bear "responsibility for actions committed in the past by other members of the same race or sex" by virtue of my race or sex (lines 1232-1233) nor has it made me feel "discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress" (lines 1234-1235). I have never been made to feel that any race or sex is inherently superior to another race or sex (lines 1219-1220). I have never been made to feel that I am "inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously" (lines 1221-1223) by virtue of my race or sex.

White men have historically held the most power societally, so if anyone would be made to feel guilty for their race or sex by studying these "controversial" subjects, it would be me. But, as a white man, I have never been made to feel that way when learning about so-called "controversial" beliefs or policies. **To put it simply, this bill is predicated on an issue that does not exist; no one is being taught that they are racist or sexist simply because of their race or sex.**

What learning about “controversial” issues *has* done for me is make me want to work for a brighter future, a future where hard work is rewarded regardless of any personal identity, and a future where every single person in this country can realize the American dream. This bill would not put Ohioans any closer to this future, and it is a misguided attempt at eliminating racism and sexism.

Forcing silence on “controversial” topics will do more to propagate racism and sexism than would allowing any “controversial” topic to be taught. It is important for everyone to learn about discrimination that has occurred throughout our nation’s history, so that we do not repeat mistakes of the past. Students are not being taught about these “controversial” topics and policies so that they will go on to create new biases in society. We are learning about the mistakes of the past to create a more egalitarian, meritocratic future where people can truly do anything they aspire to do through a hard work ethic.

I implore you to consider my testimony and vote ‘**no**’ on this harmful bill.

Thank you for allowing me to testify, Senators.

Respectfully,

Nathan Squillante