

Hello, I am Kate Simon. I am here today to present my testimony against senate bill 1, my testimony will be focused on DEI, but let it be known there is so much wrong in this bill and simply I believe it would disqualify the title of “higher education” to our ohio campus’. The media has portrayed DEI as something bad, politicians have claimed enforcing DEI has taken lives, upheld unqualified people, and have taken jobs away from “hard working american people.” However when you say DEI in a non-acronym form, you get diversity, equality and inclusion. Diversity is important for finding multiple different perspectives. As someone who has taken courses at the University of Cincinnati on groups at work, I know that diversity can shift a whole conversation. As humans, we do not know everything, we just know what we experience in our lifetime. So when I am in a group with someone, or just being taught by an instructor who grew up in a totally different lifestyle than me - whether that be culture, country of origin, or societal class ranking, I gain knowledge and experience of something new that broadens my understanding of the course, my life, and the world. E is for equality, which according to the Oxford dictionary means “the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, and opportunities.” I’m not sure what else I can say for this other than that people should be seen as equal. When stripped to who we are, no one is lesser or more than anyone on this planet. We are all human and only what we do with being human individually can be judged. I is for inclusion, inclusion/including is something we need to thrive as people. To be included despite disability, race, religion, gender, sex and sexuality is important for the wellbeing of those in marginalized groups. To feel a sense of belonging is all we crave for as humans. To not belong, to not be welcomed, and to be told you dont matter is absolutely not acceptable.

In this bill it clearly states that diversity, equality and inclusion, as well as many other topics, are “controversial beliefs or policies.” I want you to think about all I said and think how any of it is controversial. Is having a curriculum that will inform and give students various perspectives to view the world bad? Are scholarships given to those with a low-class income so they can receive the same education as me bad? Is promoting safe spaces on campus and providing adequate care for students bad? Because this bill will disband all of that. I ask you to please listen to the students and the people that thrive for a better, loving and accepting tomorrow. Please let my message cause reflection. Thank you.