

Written Testimony of Vaishali V. Raval, PhD, Licensed Psychologist in Ohio
Before the Senate Higher Education Committee
Senator Kristina Roegner, Chair
Submitted via email on February 10, 2025 for the opponent hearing scheduled on February 11, 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this written testimony against SB1. My name is Vaishali Raval. I am a resident of West Chester, Ohio, and I am a professor of Psychology at Miami University, where I have taught for 18 years. I do not represent Miami University; instead, I am submitting testimony as a private citizen. My primary concern, as outlined below, is that **SB1 would prevent the development of key skills among Ohio students, impeding their ability to be well-prepared to join the diverse US and global workforce.**

Ohio has seen remarkable positive momentum for the future with investment from global companies like Intel and Honda. These companies have chosen Ohio because in addition to the business-friendly policies, Ohio provides a globally competitive labor pool that is well-positioned to drive success in our global future. **SB1 will unfortunately reduce the ability of Ohio students to become well-rounded global leaders who are rooted in not only the values of hard work and ethics, but also an empathy for their fellow employees and community members.**

At Miami University, I teach courses where students learn important skills of self-awareness rooted in understanding their own culture, recognition of different perspectives of their peers, and learning to communicate with others from different backgrounds in a respectful manner. The students I have taught and mentored are currently employed in the non-profit sector and for-profit corporate entities including fortune 500 companies. They recognized that understanding diverse perspectives, communicating respectfully and sensitively across differences, and problem solving to address real-world challenges are skills that are important no matter what career path they choose. In the corporate sector, they will likely be a part of a global team with members from Asia, Africa, Europe, or Latin America working together on a product, and learning to navigate differences would be critical to their team success. In the healthcare sector, learning to provide culturally competent care would be essential to improving health outcomes.

SB-1 requires the board of trustees of state institutions to adopt and enforce policies that will prohibit any orientation or training courses in diversity, equity, and inclusion. The courses that I teach and the mentoring I provide integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion in every aspect of the course. **Removing diversity, equity, and inclusion from these courses, as stipulated by SB1, would render them inaccurate and incomplete, failing to prepare Ohio students to be effective thinkers, empathic communicators, and problem-solvers to function effectively across employment settings.**

In conclusion, the proposed ban on diversity, equity, and inclusion training in SB1 poses a significant threat to the quality of education Ohio students receive, in turn, limiting their skills as they enter the workforce. **I urge you to oppose SB1 to ensure that our educational institutions can continue to prepare professionals who contribute to supporting a stable economy, competent healthcare, and an empathic Ohio community.**