

February 10, 2025

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 Georgia Anderson. I am a lifelong resident of Clermont County, a graduate of public education, and a first-generation college graduate. In fact, I hold a PhD, that I earned at the age of 44, after working over a decade as an oncology social worker. I currently am employed by a state university, in a school of social work. I am extraordinarily proud of my education, particularly since my father was the first man in his family to graduate high school. Higher education provided me a place to thrive, be challenged, and earn success. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

The beauty of education is once it is earned, it cannot be taken away. Going to college opened so many doors for me. The experience taught me about differences in culture, religion, and ways to think about the world. I was challenged to reflect upon where my ideas and values originated. I was taught how to think – not what to think.

Becoming a social worker was a perfect blend of all the things I love: getting to know people and hear their stories, providing comfort during times of adversity, advocating for fairness and equal opportunity, and giving a voice to people who did not have the power to be heard. All these principals echoed the values I learned in my Appalachian family. Being a professor of social work provides me the opportunity to train other professions to address mental health issues, aging, physical illness, civic engagement, and collaboration. Working in academia allows me to conduct research that will improve the lives of cancer survivors and their families.

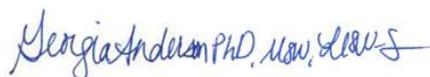
Academic freedom is critical to innovation. This freedom is threatened by SB 1 and HB 6. Earning tenure is an arduous process that requires candidates to rigorously create knowledge through research, excel at teaching, and humbly provide service to the community. As a tenure track faculty, I am concerned that all my hard work will not be rewarded with tenure if this legislation passes. I am also worried about my safety, should I be required to post my syllabi with information that would allow anyone who disagrees with my classes to show up at my office, or worse, my home. This legislation would limit my union in its ability to advocate for safe and fair working conditions, that ultimately benefit students.

I am a hard-working professional, who became an academic to teach students how to make the world a better place. This legislation implies that I cannot be trusted to teach students how to do this in an unbiased manor. It is a slap in the face and disrespects the years of study and dedication it has taken to get to this point of my career.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Georgia Anderson PhD, MSW, LISW-S". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Georgia Anderson, PhD, MSW, LISW-S