Opposition Testimony

Senate Bill 1

2/10/25

Members of the Ohio Senate,

My name is Gray Blandford, I am a resident of Ohio and a student at University of Cincinnati. I am testifying on behalf of myself as a private citizen. The students of Ohio and I do not want Senate Bill 1. I am deeply concerned about how this bill could negatively impact the education and future of students across our state.

I am particularly disappointed with the proposed ban on all diversity, equity and inclusion office, training, orientations and scholarships on college campuses. The removal of DEI programs will directly harm the progress we have made toward creating an inclusive and supportive environment for all students. These diversity initiatives help foster a campus culture where students of all backgrounds feel welcomed, respected, and heard. DEI programs not only promote a more inclusive atmosphere but also prepare students for the diverse and interconnected world we live in. Also, many students from underrepresented groups rely on these programs for support, mentorship, and community. I am familiar with plenty of these programs on UC's campus and have worked closely with a couple of them. Their missions are vital to my fellow students and me.

This bill does not reflect the needs and aspirations of college students in Ohio. We need policies that support academic freedom, equal access to education, and financial stability for students who are already facing high tuition costs and student debt. Rather than limiting diversity efforts, Ohio should be expanding resources and initiatives that ensure every student has equal access to the opportunities and support they deserve. The decisions made today will have a lasting impact on our state's future workforce, economy, and society as a whole. I urge you to reconsider this ban and protect the rights of all Ohio students to receive a fair, inclusive, and supportive education.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Gray Blandford

University of Cincinnati

Cincinnati, Ohio