

We imagine a seven-year old raising her hand in the back of this hearing room.

She says, “Why are you doing this? Lots of my friends are different than me. Why do you want to make their lives harder? My daddy belongs to a union and he says this hurts the unions. My mommy works for the university and she says her friends who work hard to help students will be losing their jobs.

She says a lot of people won’t want to live in Ohio anymore because they won’t feel welcome. My teacher says whenever we have problems with other people we should sit down together and try to work it out. Why aren’t you doing that? Why are you doing this?”

As volunteer members of the Athens Community Relations Commission, we are concerned about a number of aspects of this bill. Diversity issues have long been part of our charge and our work. It is this prohibition that we are speaking to here. Our community is much stronger and more vibrant because individuals and groups from colleges and universities have paid attention to these issues.

Diversity work is not anti-white, anti-straight or anti-male. Diversity work makes our state better for everyone. It would be a mistake to pass this bill, with enormous and long-lasting human and economic costs for our beloved state.

Vote no on Senate Bill 1.

Athens Community Relations Commission