

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 Sophia Goldberg. I am a student at Miami University and a proud resident of Ohio. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

College should be a place for the free exchange of ideas. This bill claims to be aimed towards protecting students, but all it does is limit free speech. I strongly disagree with things like climate change denial, but I would never demand a classmate be silenced for expressing their beliefs. Furthermore, I have never seen or heard of such a thing happening on campus. The claims being made, that students are being forced to only express certain beliefs, is absurd. I can promise you, I see people on campus I disagree with every day. They are allowed to hold those beliefs, and I am allowed to argue against them. The same is true in reverse. When opposition is falsely equated with censorship or discrimination, it puts the free speech of everyone involved at risk.

Furthermore, diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives do not restrict students. On the contrary, they primarily exist to protect students who have historically been, and often continue to be, discriminated against. These initiatives exist to support students, not restrict free speech. Senator Cirino's bill will not restore free speech to our campuses, it will destroy it.

Finally, I believe it is deeply undemocratic to try and restrict the right that university staff have to strike. The Supreme Court has historically upheld the right of employees to go on strike whether they have a union or not. To try and put a rule like this in place on a state level ignores a fundamental right for all workers.

As someone who cares deeply about the education, safety, and rights of students across our state, I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this extremely harmful bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.