

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino and members of the Senate Higher Education Committee, my name is Alexandria Michaelson, and I am a student leader at the University of Cincinnati College of Law. I am involved in several campus organizations that support underrepresented students and I strongly oppose Senate Bill 1 because it unfairly targets Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs that are vital to student success.

As an LGBTQ+ student, I know firsthand how important DEI initiatives are in creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment. These programs help students like me navigate the challenges of higher education, build community, and access critical resources. By banning DEI initiatives, this bill sends a clear message that Ohio does not value diversity or equal opportunity. It tells marginalized students that we are not welcome, which will only make it harder for our universities to recruit and retain talent. If we truly want Ohio's higher education system to thrive, we must embrace inclusivity, not erase it. I ask this committee to reject Senate Bill 1 and stand up for all students.