

Anna Stevenson
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 Anna Stevenson. I am a current undergraduate student at Kent State University. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

I have quite a few issues with this bill, however since I only have a few minutes to speak, I will focus on one aspect that is very close to me.

Senate Bill 1 Sec. 3345.0217 states that professors “shall not seek to indoctrinate any social, political, or religious point of view.” On its own, this doesn’t sound like an inherently negative thing- healthy debate and discussion is a key part of any strong education. However, indoctrination is not defined in this bill, and many have wildly differing ideas of what exactly constitutes indoctrination.

Being a lesbian, this word is unfortunately familiar to me as one of the many words people use to fear-monger about my community.

I am highly aware that there are many who believe that even seeing two gay people holding hands or a trans person simply existing counts as “indoctrination.” Unfortunately this is not exaggeration- in 2012, the American Family Association took issue with an anti-bullying campaign, and called it “gay indoctrination” simply for asking children to not call things they didn’t like “gay.” (ABC News, 2012)

The inflated fear of gay or trans “indoctrination” also does quite a bit of heavy lifting when it comes to legislation banning the mention of queerness in schools, commonly known as “Don’t Say Gay” laws. While some of these laws outright call for a ban on anything that “supports or addresses” the LGBT community, such as Tennessee’s HB800 from 2022, many others use vague language that makes it difficult for teachers to understand where the line is drawn. In 2023, a Florida teacher was investigated for “indoctrination” after showing her class a Disney movie which featured a short subplot about a gay character. (Halpert, 2023) Senate Bill 1’s language unfortunately mirrors this vagueness, leaving it up to professors to either find out what is punishable for themselves, or to not toe the line at all.

This is highly concerning to me.

This bill does not outright call for the end of any classes and majors relating to gender or sexuality. However, if a fictional gay character existing for minutes in a movie can be considered indoctrination under laws like these, how are professors supposed to go in depth about our real life communities and history without fear of retaliation?

I came to Kent State for its academic programs, but also because it has a reputation for being welcoming to the LGBT community. Knowing that my professors can openly have my back has been indispensable to feeling safe to attend a college far from home.

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

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

I will now take any questions you may have.

[ABC News. \(2012, October 15\). *Anti-Bullying Campaign Called Gay Indoctrination By Conservative Group*. ABC News.](#)

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/mix-day-attacked-effort-promote-gay-agenda/story?id=17484>

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[Halpert, M. \(2023, May 15\). Florida teacher Jenna Barbee says she faces investigation for playing Disney movie. *BBC News*.](#)

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-65597128>

[H.B. 0800, 112th General Assembly. \(2022\).](#)