

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 Josie Mayle. I am a student at Cleveland State University with a major in biology, a resident of Shaker Heights, and a member of the Ohio Student Association. I am very interested in conservation biology with a passion for studying how climate change impacts our ecosystems and wildlife. I have been closely following this bill for over a year and it is for these reasons that I uphold my strong opposition to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

Under this bill, all public institutions must “declare that it will not endorse or oppose, as an institution, any controversial belief or policy,” with one specific listed example of a controversial belief being climate policy. I’d like to use my time today to affirm that climate policy, such as those influenced by the findings of conservation biology, is not a political controversy. Climate change, defined as the long-term shift in Earth’s weather patterns, is not a political controversy. It is a scientific theory backed by unequivocal evidence. You cannot prevent scientific theory from being discussed in science classes.

I would argue that the scientists teaching these classes should be allowed to guide students to the correct answer as it pertains to climate change and policy, because there is a correct answer. The planet’s global temperature is rising at an extreme rate due to human intervention, and we must enact policy to combat this before our species suffers. That is the correct answer, and the classroom is where students go to learn it. You would not allow a student to incorrectly believe that the Pythagorean Theorem is not real or effective; I implore you to treat climate change and policy the exact same. There are lives at stake.

There are many other concerns I have with this bill, but I am specifically addressing the topic of climate change because it relates to my desired career path. I would not have found my passion for conservation biology if not for the curriculum of my major. I would hate to see others robbed of this opportunity, as well as myself losing potential networking opportunities, because of legislation that refuses to acknowledge the very real nature of climate action. Frankly, I am concerned about the snowball effect that this will cause. Scientists are getting increasingly tired of government legislation preventing them from taking the action necessary to combatting this issue.

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

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.