

Chairwoman Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Higher Education Committee,

My name is Sarah Schwartze, and I am a proud recipient of the Land Grant Scholarship here at The Ohio State University. I am currently majoring in Psychology, with a focus in American Sign Language (ASL) therapy for individuals who are Deaf. I am writing today to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 1. As a lifelong resident of Ohio, I have always held a deep appreciation for the educational opportunities available within our state. However, I believe that SB1 acts as a significant threat to the future of higher education in Ohio for myself, and for the education of others, and future students.

Growing up, I have valued the rich and diverse educational experiences that have shaped my perspective. Growing up in a small town, I was indubitably unaware of how diverse education could be. It wasn't until I was accepted to Ohio State and attended many classrooms that I truly understood the importance of diverse perspectives and backgrounds within the educational system. Universities, such as Ohio State thrive on the richness of ideas and the varied experiences that their student's carry. The privilege I am granted of learning from my peers is a key component to my success here. Their viewpoints, differences, and cultures have all been instrumental in shaping my education. This will inherently build my character in ways that prepare me for future careers. SB1 threatens to undermine these very principles that make institutions like Ohio State successful. It is most important that we continue to express our diverse perspectives in the classroom. The teaching of history, especially, can be at risk under this bill. Education should serve to broaden our understanding of the world, not narrow it. We teach history so history won't repeat itself.

I am incredibly fortunate and grateful to be here at Ohio State, the opportunity made possible through the Land Grant Scholarship. The scholarship was not awarded based on "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion" (DEI) initiatives, but rather as a recognition of my academic performance leading up to the university level. This scholarship is a merit. Without this scholarship, I would not have had the financial means to attend and further my education.

While my scholarship is not explicitly tied to DEI, the broader mission of the Land Grant program inherently supports the idea of fostering a diverse, equitable educational environment. As proposed by SB1, restricting access to a broader range of educational experiences would undermine these values and directly harm students like me. Students like me are reliant on merit-based opportunities to reach and achieve their academic goals. The impact of SB1 would extend far beyond my own personal experience.

The educational system in Ohio should continue to foster a learning environment where diverse perspectives are valued and where students are granted the opportunity to learn from the rich history of our society. If it stands, SB1 would be a step backward, not just for higher education, but for the future of Ohio as a whole. I beg of you to reconsider Senate Bill 1.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Sarah Schwartze
The Ohio State University