

Chairman, members of the committee, my name is Katharine Elliott, and I am a parent of two students currently attending Ohio public schools. I am testifying in opposition to Senate Bill 1.

My first objection is to the very idea of renaming the Department of Education to the Department of Education and Workforce. Education is not intrinsically tied to careers or the workforce. It is integral to a just and functioning society. It is about bettering ourselves by understanding the world and the people around us. How dare you diminish the art and ideal of education by demanding that it be tied to work and profits.

Additionally, as a parent, I want my children to receive the best education possible. I have two daughters, one who has been diagnosed with ADHD. The elimination of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion programs will directly impact them both as young women, and my oldest's need for special accommodations. As a bisexual woman, the attempt to erase openness of thought for different family structures and lived experiences is shameful. This elimination sends a message that Ohio does not value inclusion and equal opportunity.

I want my children to receive an education that prepares them to think critically about the diverse world we live in. Banning discussion around "controversial" topics does not make those topics go away. This bill seeks to inject political oversight into university curriculums, stripping institutions of their ability to provide a robust and independent education.

Moreover, as a former teacher and one who has many friends who are professors, I am intimately aware that the removal of collective bargaining rights for faculty members could destabilize our universities, making it harder to attract and retain quality educators.

I want Ohio to be a place where my children can receive a top-tier education, but this bill will be catastrophic. Please vote against Senate Bill 1.

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