

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 William Phillips. I am a resident physician and I am opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6. My concerns are as follows:

Our constitution protects our freedom of speech and ideas. While political indoctrination is not acceptable in the classroom, discourse on difficult topics is vital to the development of learner's critical thinking. By banning discussion on controversial topics in the classroom, we deprive learners the opportunity to develop their own identities and beliefs. One such topic that has been politicized recently is diversity, equity, and inclusion. By not allowing these topics to occur in the classroom, we can potentially overlook under-represented communities. For example, medical students are encouraged to research and understand the best treatments for their patients. As a physician now, I understand that each patient is different and their ethnic backgrounds and communities they come from do in fact influence my treatments and care for each patient. For example, the understanding of different diseases rely on discourse and research to understand how they might affect different racial groups or individuals from different socioeconomic classes. Furthermore, discussions on sensitive topics such as birth control and abortion are an important part of medical school so that we can understand how to help patients who might have experienced adverse outcomes from these procedures.

In addition, it is difficult to define what is "DEI" and it would be very difficult to enforce these since we do not have a very good definition or evidence of specific indoctrinations in higher education. Furthermore, our constitution and laws encourage non-discrimination based on race/sex/disability and I believe that since DEI is potentially a broad topic, this can lead to infringement on existing laws. As a result, we might see increased censorship of ideas from government, especially regarding topics that are not in line with a current administration.

While I support some of the language of this bill, including a better understanding of our constitution, economic policy, and government system, I am concerned that the overall agenda of this bill will lead to infringements on free speech and diminish professionals' (such as physicians) ability to serve individual patients and communities.

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

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.  
William Phillips