

DATE: February 10, 2025

TO: Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Higher Education Committee

RE: Opposition Testimony: SB1 and companion Bill HB6

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Michelle Pate. I am a retired software developer with two wonderful adult kids (one is transgender & one has cerebral palsy). We are originally from Florida. I am writing to urge you to vote against SB 1 and its companion bill, HB 6. My reasoning is based on the fallout from the Stop WOKE Act (Individual Freedom Act) in Florida (one of many bills drafted by DeSantis in 2022 based on his anti-woke ideology). It was intended to "prevent discussion, teachings or mandatory workplace activities that suggest a person is privileged or oppressed based on their race, color, sex or national origin". This legislation resulted in teachers and student families relocating out of FL due to the animosity that was created in the communities, schools and colleges (colleges like UF, my alma mater, which seen a drop in enrollment and resulted in professors leaving). Fortunately, a portion of this horrible legislation was overturned in federal court by Chief US District Judge Mark Walker, but the damage that's been done has left it's mark on the state.

My family relocated to Ohio due to employment/business ownership, reasonable cost of living & overall friendliness. I urge you to weigh the costs (both fiscal and psychological) before voting on this destructively hateful, discriminatory bill. Voting NO on this bill will preserve harmony, jobs, safety and lives!

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.