

Testimony of Emily O'Quin
Before the Senate Higher Education Committee
Senator Kristina Roegner, Chair

February 11, 2025

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingram, and Members of the Higher Education Committee:

Hello. My name is Emily O'Quin, I am an undergraduate social work student at the University of Akron, and I plan to attend the Ohio State University for my Masters Degree in Social Work. I am writing in opposition of Senate Bill 1. This bill would have disastrous effects on higher education, especially Social Work education.

In order to be accredited by the Council for Social Work Education (CSWE), a social work program must adhere to nine competencies. Two out of these nine competencies (Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice and Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Practice) include lessons relating to concepts of diversity and its impact on social work practice. It is crucial that social work students such as myself are able to learn about these concepts that are so integral to the core of the social work profession.

Banning or discouraging these topics from being discussed in classrooms could lead to social work degree granting programs all across the state losing their CSWE accreditation. If this happens, graduates of these programs would be ineligible to become licensed social workers in Ohio.

Social workers provide critical services such as behavioral health treatment, crisis intervention, substance abuse treatment, support for people with developmental disabilities, and much more. Ohioans cannot afford to lose the important services that social workers provide. I ask you all to do the right thing and prevent this bill from moving forward. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Emily O'Quin