

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 Kristy McCray. Though I am originally from California, I have made Ohio my forever home after coming here in 2012 for graduate school at THE Ohio State university. For the last 10 years after earning my PhD, I have been a faculty member at Otterbein University. I teach both general education, as well as major specific courses in sport management, often with a focus on social class, gender, race and ability in sport, as well as how those issues impact folks outside of sport as well. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

In one of the most popular general education courses on campus, I use the OJ Simpson murder trial as a case study in sport celebrity, race, gender, and social class, including the impacts of violence and racism both inside and outside the criminal justice system. Students learn about feminism and domestic violence, as well as study Critical Race Theory and apply its concepts to our course material. In more than 6 years of teaching this class, I've never had a student tell me they felt indoctrinated – that they regretted learning about race and racism and CRT – that they felt bullied into feeling shame or guilt about their whiteness or privilege. (In fact, the closest I've come to negative criticism on the difficult subjects of race and gender is when student wrote in an anonymous end of year evaluation: "I would like to hear more about how gender equalities are affected on both sides, more than just women." Point taken and now we do a unit on violence against men, as well.)

In reality, most students appreciate learning about a difficult, important, crucial topic (race, racism, and how CRT analyzes power differences in our country's legal and educational systems). Here is what they're learning, in their own words – most of these are comments are from anonymous, end-of-year evaluations, though some students have emailed me directly to share their appreciation for what we're learning (including CRT and feminism).

"Thank you so much for this semester. This is easily the best class I have ever taken and you made me think about things that I would have never been taught to think about. I have never taken a class as thought-provoking as this one and it was amazing."

"The most interesting course that I took outside of my major was the {OJ Simpson course}. After taking the course and my other courses I would have to agree that this was by far my favorite. I went into the course without much knowledge of OJ Simpson or the murder of Nicol Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman. In this class, we dove into the details of the trial and the racial implications of a guilty verdict. What I found most interesting was the investigation into the social cultural environment, specifically relating to {the Rodney King} protest before this trial. This class taught me to consider many different perspectives and that there isn't always one right clear answer to questions."

"She pushes us because she knows we have the capabilities to use our critical thinking to re-examine historical moments."

“Looking back over the entire semester the instructor helped with my learning is allowed us to have good conversations that allowed me to grow and learn more about the topics at hand. She had a wide variety of articles that allowed us to learn more and come to terms with certain situations and why they happen or what we can do about them. She allowed us to have group conversations so that we could bounce ideas off our classmates and see where they stood on certain things and I think that helped because I took away a lot from this class just by listening and reading.”

My students are not anomalies – they are eager to learn and grow, to be challenged by new material, to examine history with a critical eye, to become lifelong learners. They are NOT afraid of indoctrination – I value their critical thinking skills, and so should you. Banning certain topics or material in classrooms because it’s “controversial” doesn’t help students – it tells them you don’t trust their ability to evaluate information, engage in critical thinking, and think for themselves.

Please don’t hamstring education. I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on SB1, a harmful bill that does not enhance and encourage education, but rather stifles Ohio’s students and educators.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Kristy McCray, PhD

[kristymccray@gmail.com](mailto:kristymccray@gmail.com)