

Written Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 1

Harley Hill

My name is Harley. I am a student at Kent State University, working on a Bachelor of Science and Master of Public Health. My dream for the past five years is to be a public health scientist. Unfortunately, I am not sure if this will be a possibility, since I do not know if the College of Public Health will continue to exist, due to this bill. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill, HB 6.

The language of SB 1 is so vague that it is difficult to discern whether state institutions of higher education in Ohio will remove their programs of public health, climate- and environmental science, history, and other subject matters that this bill says are “Controversial,” yet do not outline. By prohibiting state institutions of higher education in Ohio from “endorsing or opposing” anything deemed a “controversial belief or policy,” these institutions are effectively censored. What qualifies as “endorsing or opposing?” Does merely having a public health program mean that an institution is “endorsing” public health? Does a course on the Holocaust now require a statement that the Nazis believed they were right to commit genocide?

Never in my educational experience, from 2019 as a College Credit Plus student, until today, has a professor, advisor, faculty, or staff member at community college, private college, or public college in Ohio, ever indoctrinated me. They have always encouraged me to do my own readings, to do literature reviews and speak with experts on subject material. The basis on which Senate Bill 1 was created is false—there is no such thing as a “liberal bias” in academia.

Professors are not indoctrinating their students to vote Democrat.

Studies have come out, saying that people with higher education tend to vote more “left” on the political spectrum. Rather than attempting to appeal to those with higher educational degrees, the majority party of the Ohio government—the Republican Party, including State Senator Cirino who sponsored Senate Bill 1—has decided to target higher education. They have decided to destroy it, censoring education to make less truthful and insightful. They have decided to limit what Ohio students can learn, to limit where Ohio students feel safe, to limit Ohio students’ progress. They would rather kill higher education than understand why people with college degrees tend to disagree with them.

I ask you to consider my testimony and to vote “No” on this extremist bill.