

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 Deborah Caroline Steele. In a few weeks I am going to be a proud graduate with a master of Sustainability, Security, and Resilience from Ohio University. I am also a 2003 graduate from THE Ohio State University, where I received a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology. I have been a Fiscal Officer for more than a decade at Clinton Township, here in Franklin County. I am overwhelmingly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

As elected officials, we take an oath to perform the duties of our office faithfully. I know you know it is an honor to serve our neighbors. I enrolled in a program at OU that is part of the Voinovich School of *Leadership* and *Public Service* to help our communities better meet the challenges of living in a warmer world. My mind was fostered and grown under the guiding light of knowledge for the sake of knowledge, and the legislation you are considering brings only darkness to this concept and our state.

Everyone here was free to explore concepts and learn from teachers and professors who also shined under the notion of knowledge for the sake of knowledge. Do not restrict the educational institutions that grow our minds and our hearts. There is nothing to fear in gaining knowledge and allowing others to do the same. Instead, join me in educated, thoughtful, spirited debates as we aim to set policies that allow more of us opportunities to better care for ourselves, our families, and our communities.

Right now, we are all suffering from too much fear of the unknown, of the other, of steep challenges our communities have not faced before. Help us meet these challenges with more insight, not less. We elect people to be leaders, and that should be towards light, towards knowledge, and, therefore, towards building a world that is closer to being just. Be honorable and vote for light.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this bill that only aims to dim and limit our minds and hearts from knowledge for the sake of knowledge.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

I will now take any questions you may have.