

Senate Bill 1, higher ed bill that bans DEI, eliminates faculty strikes, heads to DeWine

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[A bill](#) headed to Gov. Mike DeWine's desk would eliminate diversity, equity and inclusion in higher education, ban faculty strikes and prohibit universities from weighing in on "controversial" beliefs from immigration to climate change.

DeWine, a Republican, is expected to sign it into law. Most of the changes would take effect 90 days later.

[Senate Bill 1](#)'s supporters say the sweeping changes are needed to curb "woke," liberal ideology on public college campuses. Universities and colleges that don't comply risk losing state funding.

"This is not about censure or erasure. It's not about exclusion. It's about inclusion that transcends labels," said Sen. Michele Reynolds, R-Canal Winchester, while wearing a shirt that read "No labels, just neighbors." "It is time that we remove the DEI labels. We can do better."

The bill sped through the GOP-controlled Ohio Legislature in two months. Sen. Jerry Cirino, R-Kirtland, led the charge to pass the sweeping higher education bill and commended lawmakers' quick work.

Opponents worry that Senate Bill 1 will discourage students and professors from coming to Ohio. The bill would make it easier to end programs, fire faculty and eliminate DEI training and scholarships.

Sen. Catherine Ingram, D-Cincinnati, said it wasn't that long ago that African Americans couldn't apply for certain jobs, and that sentiment hasn't gone away. "When you don't remember something, the fear is that you repeat it."

Sen. Bill DeMora, D-Columbus, called Senate Bill 1 the worst legislation the Senate had ever approved. "This bill is cow manure."

Senate Bill 1 includes:

- **A diversity, equity and inclusion ban:** The bill would prohibit diversity, equity and inclusion in recruiting, training and scholarships. An institution could ask the Ohio Department of Higher Education for a waiver if DEI instruction is needed for accreditation or a specific licensure.
- **Ban on faculty strikes:** Full-time faculty would be prohibited from striking during contract negotiations.
- **Annual reviews and post-tenure reviews:** The bill would require annual evaluations for faculty, including those with tenure. Feedback from students and peers would be included. Poor performance could lead to discipline or firing.
- **No positions on "controversial beliefs:"** Higher education institutions could not take a position on any "controversial belief or policy," which is defined as climate policies, politics, foreign policy, DEI programs, immigration policy, marriage, abortion or "any belief or policy that is the subject of political controversy."
- **Eliminate majors:** Universities and colleges would eliminate any undergraduate degree program if fewer than five students earned degrees over three years.
- **Online syllabi:** Professors would be required to post their syllabi online for students, parents and the public to review beginning in the 2026-2027 academic year.
- **Required civics lesson:** Students would be required to complete a three-credit hour course on American civics literacy to graduate. The course would review capitalism and documents like the U.S. Constitution and the Emancipation Proclamation. Students who complete certain high school courses could be exempt.
- **Shorten terms for university trustees:** The bill would reduce the years a university trustee would serve from nine to six. Ohio State University's student trustees could no longer vote on issues.
- **More three-year degrees?** The bill would require the Ohio Department of Higher Education to review whether more degrees can be completed in three years instead of four.
- **Ban on gifts, new partnerships with China:** The proposed law would prohibit universities and colleges from accepting donations and gifts from China.
- **Five-year cost summary:** Universities and colleges must provide lawmakers with a five-year summary of their costs as legislators consider their budgets.

The Ohio Legislative Black Caucus urged DeWine to veto the bill during a Wednesday news conference.

"(Senate Bill 1) is toxic. It is a threat to free speech," said Rep. Desiree Tims, D-Dayton. "It is racist. Since when is diversity, equity and inclusion a bad thing?"

The NAACP [is suing President Donald Trump's administration over the dismantling of DEI federally](#). Derrick L. Forward, vice president of the Ohio NAACP, said local leaders are awaiting direction from their national office on whether they would bring a lawsuit against Senate Bill 1.