



February 23, 2024

The Honorable Mike Wilson
Kentucky State Senator, Majority Whip, District 32
702 Capital Avenue, Room 242
Kentucky Capitol Annex Building
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

Senator Wilson:

The Prichard Committee appreciates your service in the Senate and recognizes our shared responsibility to create policies that improve education outcomes and support the long-term success of our state. We stand committed to working with you to ensure a big bold future for all Kentuckians.

In this spirit, we write to express our concern regarding the potential impacts of Senate Bill 6 on our colleges, universities, and, most importantly, our students. The essence of higher education lies in its ability to create critical thinkers and leaders prepared to contribute positively to our diverse society.

Central to this mission is the current academic freedom within our curriculum to explore the varied perspectives of students, faculty, and staff. SB 6, as currently drafted, poses challenges to core education principles, including the possible prevention of beneficial classroom curriculum and discussion of important current and historical events.

To address these issues, we are posing two suggestions to SB 6 which are outlined below:

1. On page 6, line 13, insert a provision that is similar to the following:
 - a. Nothing in this section shall be interpreted to (continuing the language of subsection (7)): “Prevent the public postsecondary institution from offering courses, course curriculum, or prevent classroom discussion related to discriminatory concepts, so long as the courses, course curriculum, and classroom discussion are held to the following standards:
 - i. Conducted in a manner that promotes respectful dialogue, critical thinking, and academic freedom, free of malice and vindictive intent; and
 - ii. Diverse perspectives and issues related to historical and contemporary instances of, discrimination and inequality, and are conducted in a manner that upholds the principles of academic integrity, intellectual diversity, and open inquiry.”
2. On page 6, line 24, insert a provision that is similar to the following:
 - a. “The governing boards of each public postsecondary education institution shall maintain policies and procedures to review course content and instructional practices to ensure compliance with Section 1 of this Act, while preserving the rights of faculty members to teach and students to learn in an environment that fosters inclusive excellence and scholarly rigor.”



By potentially restricting discussions and academic inquiries related to discriminatory concepts under the proposed statutory construct, there is a risk of stifling students' critical thinking skills that they profoundly need in today's interconnected world, in addition to an impact on the recruitment of top-tier faculty and students. The broader implication of this bill is the potential impact on Kentucky's workforce and economic competitiveness by restricting Kentucky's business community from a desired pool of graduates who are highly informed and have diverse educational perspectives.

It is crucial that Kentucky maintain educational environments that respect and promote the free exchange of ideas and support the comprehensive development of our students.

We stand ready to engage in a constructive dialogue with you and work toward solutions that align with our shared goal of advancing and raising the quality of education in our state.

Sincerely,

Brigitte Blom
President & CEO
Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence