

Scott W. DiMauro
President

Jeffrey Wensing
Vice President

Mark A. Hill
Secretary-Treasurer

Patricia Collins Murdock
Executive Director

The OEA will lead the way for continuous improvement of public education while advocating for members and the learners they serve.

225 E. Broad St., Box 2550,
Columbus, OH 43216
PHONE: (614) 228-4526
or 1-800-282-1500
FAX: (614) 228-8771

Ohio House Higher Education and Career Readiness Committee
Senate Bill 135: Written Interested Party Testimony
Scott DiMauro – President, Ohio Education Association
April 5, 2022

Good morning, Chair Lanese and members of the House Higher Education and Career Readiness Committee. My name is Scott DiMauro. I am a high school social studies teacher from Worthington with 16 years of classroom teaching experience and currently serve as President of the Ohio Education Association (OEA). On behalf of approximately 1,400 higher education members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on the provisions regarding freedom of speech on college and university campuses contained within Senate Bill 135.

Ohio's public colleges and universities recognize the 1st Amendment, the exercise of Freedom of Expression and Speech, as a central tenet of higher education. From the 1970s and onward, our colleges and universities have adopted policies and procedures to protect this critical right. These policies hold up the 1st Amendment as a means for institutions of higher education to create an academic environment of open discourse and rigorous inquiry.

OEA opposes the freedom of speech provisions currently contained in the bill. As you are aware, Ohio's colleges and universities are currently implementing the provisions of Senate Bill 40, "Forming Open and Robust University Minds Act" passed in the 133rd General Assembly. College and university students, faculty, and staff deserve to experience the full benefits of Senate Bill 40 before the legislature determines if additional action is warranted.

In summary, OEA kindly requests that these duplicative provisions regarding free speech be removed from the bill. Ohio's colleges and universities have and will continue to be places where differing viewpoints are encouraged and not muted. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Please contact me with any questions.