

Testimony of Carolyn Kazel-Rowbotham
Before the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee
Rep. Tom Young, Chair
March 11, 2025

Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and Members of the Higher Education Committee:

My name is Carolyn Kazel-Rowbotham, and I am a school counselor at Clearview High School in Lorain, OH, where I have worked for 16 years. I do not represent this school, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen. I urge you to consider the long-term effects this bill would have on the educational landscape in Ohio. As a school counselor, I see firsthand the importance of creating an environment where both students and educators are supported. SB1 threatens to disrupt that environment by undermining protections that are critical for ensuring all students have access to a high-quality, inclusive, and fair education.

The bill limits union influence in ways that will undermine workers' ability to advocate for fair wages, working conditions, and protections. By weakening the role of unions, this bill weakens the collective voice of educators who are vital in advocating for both students and educators alike. SB1 compromises academic freedom and limits educators' ability to teach controversial or important topics that may be critical to a well-rounded education. If this passes, I could not in good faith recommend Ohio colleges to my students. This undermines our students' right to receive an education that fosters critical thinking and prepares them for a diverse and ever-changing world.

In addition, I am deeply concerned about the impact this bill could have on scholarships and programs aimed at supporting under-represented students. I see first-hand how important equity is in education, leveling the playing field for students who have historically been excluded from higher education. By diverting resources away from these programs, SB1 could further exacerbate the inequities that many students of color, low-income students, and first-generation college students face.

I respectfully ask that you oppose Senate Bill 1 and protect the rights of educators, the integrity of academic freedom, and the opportunities for all students, especially those who have been historically underrepresented.

Thank you for your time and consideration.