

Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for reading my testimony. My name is Theresa Walton-Fisette. I am a mother of a school age child and one in graduate school. I am a professor at Kent State University and a leader within our faculty union Kent State United Faculty. I have lived, worked, paid taxes and raised my children in Ohio for the last 22 years. I work as an election official for Portage County and am deeply committed to our democracy.

I am strongly opposed to Senate Bill 1. As a believer in unions as a way for everyday workers to get the safest working conditions and the fairest wages, I oppose the anti-union provisions of SB1, in particular the right to strike. Kent State faculty have never gone on strike and our commitment to our students is paramount. However, that is an important bargaining chip to get movement during negotiations.

As a professor, I have a strong commitment to academic freedom. I am opposed to the provisions of SB1 that aim to curtail academic freedom and instead replace it with the favored ideologies of those currently holding political power within the state legislature of Ohio.

As a parent, I am opposed to the anti-diversity, equity and inclusion provisions of SB1. I'm embarrassed that as a state we are trying to teach our children not to value diversity, to be opposed to striving toward equity and instead to try to exclude those who look, think, believe differently than the favored ideologies of those currently in power in our state legislature. There's no way to even justify this.

SB1, taken as a whole, will lead to students outside of Ohio not wanting to enroll in Ohio institutions. It will also make worse the brain drain that Ohio currently experiences as our brightest and most talented students, who deeply value diversity, equity and inclusion, leave our state and do not return. This loss will deeply and negatively impact our economy.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote **NO** on voting this harmful bill out of this committee. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. Please reach out with any questions you may have.