

Testimony of Reanne Frank, Ph.D.
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 Reanne Frank, and I am a professor of Sociology at the Ohio State University, where I have taught for nearly 20 years. I do not represent OSU, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen.

My opposition to SB 1 is multifold. I am sure I will echo many of my colleagues across the state in objecting to the bill's suggestion that we, as faculty, are not exposing our students to "intellectual diversity" and instead are spouting ideological liberal bias in our classrooms. We are not. Nothing could be further from the truth. As scholars at a R1 University we are committed to providing our students with an unbiased evidence-based education that teaches them to be critical thinkers and global citizens –precisely the mission of a land grant institution such as ours. The implication clear throughout SB1 that we are NOT providing this type of education to our students is offensive, politically motivated, and just plain wrong. Further, I fear that the bill's effort to "increase" intellectual diversity will do the exact opposite by creating a culture of fear among faculty that will have an immediate chilling effect on the breadth of topics and viewpoints to which students are exposed.

Beyond immediate teaching impacts, I also want to share a first-hand experience of the broader negative impacts this bill will have on our University's ability to attract top talent. I am currently a chair of a faculty search committee. Last month, one of our finalists, an esteemed and nationally renowned scholar with a substantial grant portfolio, withdrew from the search. This was a sudden and extremely distressing development given that the itinerary and visit were all arranged. The reason given for the abrupt cancellation was precisely this new interventionist approach from the state legislature into public higher education. Because of the specter of this bill, the candidate decided that OSU was no longer a place that seemed safe from politicized interventions. So SB1 is already driving away talent and weakening our ability to pursue the best and brightest in our respective fields.

From my reading SB1 only has downsides. No upsides. It will hurt our state, our citizenry, and our University. I urge you to vote no.

