

Testimony of Dr. Trenton D. Wirth  
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 Trenton Wirth. I was born and raised in Ohio, attended high school in Clermont County, and earned my bachelor's degrees in Psychology and Philosophy from the University of Cincinnati in 2014. I am now a professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Cincinnati, where I have taught for nearly two years. I do not represent the University of Cincinnati but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen who is greatly concerned for the damage that Senate Bill 1 (SB1) could cause to the state of Ohio.

SB1 lays the foundation for an **economic disaster** in our state. The approach taken in SB1 will weaken Ohio's ability to compete for the best faculty and students. Higher education is an essential driver of economic growth, and this bill introduces policies that will make it harder for Ohio to attract and retain the talent needed to sustain a strong workforce and a competitive economy.

**SB1 threatens faculty retention and student enrollment**, two pillars of Ohio's economic vitality. By mandating post-tenure reviews and restricting collective bargaining on tenure policies, SB1 will create uncertainty and instability that will push highly qualified faculty to leave for states that provide greater job security and academic freedom. This outflow of talent will not only lower the quality of education at Ohio's institutions but will also reduce our ability to attract research funding, industry partnerships, and innovation, all of which contribute to long-term economic growth.

At the same time, students who see these policies as misaligned with their educational and career goals will choose to pursue their degrees in states that offer a stronger and more stable academic environment. A decline in student enrollment will **weaken Ohio** universities financially, forcing program cuts and faculty layoffs, which will further accelerate the departure of highly educated professionals from the state. This loss of skilled workers will shrink Ohio's talent pool and make it harder for businesses to find the qualified employees they need to grow and succeed.

Ohio cannot afford to drive away the very people who contribute most to its economic strength. Across the state, business leaders, educators, and students recognize that SB1 is not the right path forward. I urge the Committee to **reject SB1** and the lasting harm it will cause to Ohio's economy and reputation. Instead, I ask you to pursue policies that strengthen Ohio's higher education system to support a thriving workforce and a prosperous economy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Trenton Wirth