

Testimony of Rebecca A. Carte, 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 Rebecca Carte, Ph.D. and I am a professor of Spanish at Cuyahoga Community College. I have taught in higher education for over twenty years, both in and outside of Ohio. I am submitting testimony as a private citizen.

The legislation addressing Higher Education in Ohio, SB1, is of paramount interest to me because in addition to being a product of it, having attended Ohio University and The Ohio State University, I am currently a proud community college professor. This issue directly and significantly impacts my students, as well as my profession. My fear is that the legislation, despite being well intentioned and containing some positive aspects, will inadvertently lead to "brain drain" for Ohio.

Most disconcerting is the broad dismantling of diversity, equity and inclusion measures. Primarily because none of these terms is defined anywhere in the bill. As a result, there is no end to this measure's unintended reach, potential for abuse, or irrevocable harm to programs that make college possible for first generation students, women in STEM, veterans, the poor, and even the disabled. My students come from all different backgrounds, and many struggle financially and must overcome myriad obstacles just to get to school. This legislation could potentially make it impossible for them to achieve an education. We need a future full of educated, hardworking citizens. To that end, we need state legislation to assist Ohio's students, not throw up more roadblocks.

I am also concerned about the state further dictating what texts and topics should be included and excluded from classroom and placing syllabi on a public facing platform. This is a solution in search of a problem. To be clear, I have zero issues with sharing what I do in the classroom and how I do it upon request and students enrolled in any institution have a right to that information. If ever there is a complaint or criticism, as a faculty member, it is my responsibility to be accountable, and our institutions are already making sure that this is the case. However, to broadly flood a public-facing Web site for anyone to use to target faculty is dangerous across the political spectrum.

This leads to my final concern. Like many of our state's representatives, I love Ohio. I grew up here. We are a state known for the quality of our colleges and universities. Passage of this bill will undermine that reputation. Students will find out-of-state options that better suit their educational needs and quality professionals will be dissuaded from staying or coming to work in Ohio.

Thank you for your consideration of my viewpoint on this matter. I believe it is an important issue, and while the bill contains positive measures, it also includes some that while, I believe are well intentioned, will not have the desired outcomes. I hope you will reconsider moving this bill forward.

Respectfully,
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