

March 7, 2025

Higher Education Committee,

I am writing to oppose HB1 2025. I understand that this bill would ban diversity and inclusion efforts, prevent faculty from striking, set rules around classroom discussion, and imperil scholarships. These proposed rules about evaluation policies, tenure policies, retrenchment policies, and various other things are already being handled by Ohio institutions.

For example, when I taught at Cleveland State University or at Notre Dame College as an adjunct professor in the College of Education, every time I taught a course, I had to submit (and get approved before I taught) a course syllabus and reading list. At the end of each course, I was always evaluated and met with Department Chairs. I know that tenured professors had annual reviews, especially around the tenure process. What this proposed bill would do is layer similar mandates on what is already being done, only with a motive to align processes with a partisan view.

In terms of setting rules around classroom discussion, I find this an anti-democracy effort to limit free speech. The bill would allow students to “affirm and declare that faculty and staff shall allow and encourage students to reach their own conclusions about all controversial beliefs or policies and shall not seek to indoctrinate any social, political, or religious point of view.” I am retired from teaching but my role as a teacher spanned just over 40 years in the following levels/areas: elementary, middle and high school public-school teaching; university and college undergraduate, graduate and doctoral-level teaching and consulting/coaching leaders and teachers in many Ohio school districts.

Regardless of student level or teaching situation, considering controversial topics was central to my teaching but it was always important to clear up misunderstandings. It is not the role of legislators to create a prescribed list of what can and can't be discussed in a University classroom. Students came to me with different values from my own but I didn't see my job as changing their values. My job was to enlighten them about different valid views of the topic so that they could then make their own informed decision. This did not include adding conspiracy theories to any discussion.

If these mandates are initiated, quality teachers at all levels are going to go elsewhere because they will be afraid to speak up and they will find states and/or institutions that will protect their rights. I for one, would regrettably be seeking another profession.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this discriminative and unnecessary bill.

Sincerely,

Diana M. Tuggey, Ph.D.