

Testimony of Angela Houston
Before the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee
Rep. Tom Young, Chair
March 10, 2025

Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and Members of the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony. My name is Angela Houston, and in addition to being a resident of Cincinnati, OH, I am a college graduate and parent to two future college students. I am strongly opposed to SB 1.

I believe that a foundational principle of higher education is its role to teach students to think critically; to examine various viewpoints in order to strengthen your own belief; and to understand the many complexities of every issue. This cannot be done without the presence of a robust method for teaching and examining diversity, equity and inclusion - in every sense of all those words. The perspectives and lived experiences of veterans, differently abled people, those part of various generations, and those who identify in different races, ethnicities, religions, and more, are all part of what makes us smarter - and better - people.

If these things are stripped from our many credible institutions of higher education, I fear Ohio will lose the many academic leaders who are here currently. What's worse, we will lose future students, and, in turn, future residents of Ohio. I know I will not encourage my own children to attend college in Ohio if this bill is implemented.

I am surprised the very real economic impacts of this bill have not been discussed further. As I mentioned, I know academic leaders will leave, and students will not be attracted to Ohio universities. Places like the University of Cincinnati are leading employers of Ohio's major cities. What will it do to our local economies? I am not an economist, so I will leave it to them to lead with their expertise. But I do beg this committee to examine the question because it is a real concern for our state.

What we do know for sure is that Ohioans are against this bill. Over 1,000 opposition testimonies were submitted when this bill was heard in the Ohio Senate, compared to only 14 proponents. Furthermore, hundreds of students have gathered in protest of this bill at the University of Cincinnati, the Ohio State University, and Ohio University. Ohioans do not want this bill to pass.

For the sake of my children - whom I would otherwise WANT to attend one of our many fine state universities - I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit testimony.
Angela Houston