

Testimony of Krysten Stein, PhD

Assistant Professor of Communication

The University of Cincinnati Blue Ash College

Before the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee

Rep. Tom Young, Chair

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

My name is Krysten Stein, and I am an Assistant Professor of Communication at The University of Cincinnati Blue Ash College, where I have taught for over a decade. I do not represent the University of Cincinnati, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen deeply concerned about the future of higher education in Ohio.

I am here today to voice my strong opposition to Senate Bill 1 (SB 1)—a bill that threatens the integrity of our state’s public universities by undermining academic freedom, restricting open inquiry, and limiting the ability of educators to engage students in critical discussions. As a scholar and educator, my role is to prepare students to think critically, assess information, and engage meaningfully with the world around them. SB 1 seeks to impose political control over classrooms, discouraging open discourse and driving talented faculty and students out of Ohio.

The impact of this bill extends beyond academia. Higher education plays a crucial role in workforce development and economic growth. Employers consistently emphasize the need for workers who can think critically, communicate effectively, and adapt to a rapidly changing economy. SB 1 would weaken our ability to cultivate these skills, leaving Ohio’s students at a disadvantage compared to their peers in other states.

Moreover, the overwhelming public opposition to SB 1—evidenced by more than 840 opponent testimonies—demonstrates that this legislation is not in the best interest of Ohio’s students, educators, or economy. I urge you to listen to the voices of those who are directly affected and reject this harmful bill.

Ohio’s future depends on a strong, independent higher education system that prioritizes learning over political agendas. I ask this committee to stand in defense of academic freedom and vote against SB 1.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.