

Senate Bill 1 Opposition Testimony
Jonah Thomas Pichette
Ohio House Workforce and Higher Education Committee

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

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to submit written testimony in *opposition* to Senate Bill 1. My name is Jonah Thomas Pichette, and I am submitting this written testimony rather than speaking in front of the committee as I am a high school government and psychology educator who would not be able to be present in time to give my testimony in person. I submit this testimony as an individual, not representative of any place of employment, or group/organization of which I am affiliated.

After graduating high school, I decided to remain in the great State of Ohio to pursue higher education, first as a *Zip* for my undergraduate studies at The University of Akron, then as a *Penguin* at Youngstown State University for graduate studies, followed by further post-graduate classes at Ursuline College. This choice was expressly made because I knew Ohio would offer the high caliber education, diverse opinions, and top-talented professors I sought as a student.

Senate Bill 1 stands to detonate Higher Education in Ohio, and steer students away from Ohio for education, not towards it.

First, scholarships that have historically granted students the opportunity to further their education would no longer be able to be offered under the current language of this bill. Scholarship opportunities that allowed me to pursue education at a time when I otherwise would not have been able to, such as the “Underrepresented Student Scholarship” may disappear from future students. It perplexes me how that can be of benefit to the future of Ohio’s Higher Education and attracting top-talent.

Second, I carry real concern with the prohibition against teaching “*controversial topics*”. When you begin to dive into the bill’s language and analysis, the red-flag is so big I begin to wonder when a bull will start charging towards it. This bill pretends to promote intellectual diversity and freedom, while simultaneously stomping it to death by managing what, and how professors can teach in their classrooms. I attended higher education in Ohio to learn, and to utilize the expertise of the professor to better understand the topics at hand. I would ultimately always reach my own conclusions. To stifle the voice of a professor in a class that I, and other Ohioans, paid for is near criminal.

Additionally, this Bill would change the requirements for retaining and reviewing staff. Ohioans are smart, and know that there are already review processes built into their college courses. As a student, I always knew that the course review was my opportunity to express my pleasure or displeasure with the way in which the course was taught. I also knew that the department chair, or dean of the college was available to hear concerns should I have any.

Finally, Senate Bill 1 trounces the rights of the top-talent professors and researchers at the State's Universities. By attacking rights of collective bargaining and striking, these staff members will have an inability to effectively advocate for themselves, and the students they serve.

Ohio is currently a safe-haven for higher education. Meaning, it is a place where students aspire to study, learn, and live. Where professors and researchers know they can study and educate. Senate Bill 1, and the provisions currently within would lead to the landslide of Higher Education in the State of Ohio. Professors and researchers would leave, finding opportunities where they can be valued. Students would find Ohio's Universities to be void of the diverse opinions, high-caliber education, top-talent professors and begin to look elsewhere. This would then lead to a vacuum of employers seeking the few remaining graduates with skills necessary to thrive in the 21st century workforce.

Ohio cannot afford to follow the path of other states who have passed similar bills. Ohio's students, professors, researchers, and universities deserve better than Senate Bill 1. Ohio deserves better than Senate Bill 1.

Vote no on Senate Bill 1.

Thank you for your consideration and care of my opinion on the matter. I would always welcome questions from any member of the committee, at any time.

Sincerely,
Jonah Thomas Pichette