

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

Thank you for considering my testimony in opposition to SB 1 / HB 6, which, if passed, would impose sweeping changes on Ohio's colleges and universities and would all but destroy academic freedom.

Ohio has long been in the enviable position of being home to many, many fine universities and colleges. Our state ranks sixth among the 50 states, with 162 colleges and universities. These institutions of higher learning attract people from all over the world. They attract expertise and brain power, and more than a few graduates decide to make Ohio their home, as my husband and I did after he graduated from law school here in Ohio. Protecting these institutions and the professors who keep them vibrant is vital to our state's future economic and cultural health.

Both of my daughters-in-law are professors. One of them lives in Wisconsin and is tenured. The other recently accepted a position at one of Ohio's fine universities. Although a great deal of expense and sacrifice go into earning a PhD, most professors are not highly paid. My Ohio daughter-in-law loves her new job and hopes for a long career, but the passage of SB 1 could force her to seek a position in another state.

If SB 1 passes, how long will it be before our universities can no longer attract the best professors – or the best students? How long will it be before we lose Ohio's reputation as a leader in higher education?

Ohioans have made it very clear that this bill is extremely unpopular, and you have been able to read testimony detailing the extent of the damage SB 1/HB 6 would do to our state in countless ways.

I hope you will stand up for your neighbors, and for your state. Ohioans like me and my family are counting on you.

Sincerely,  
Deborah Cooper  
Worthington, OH