

Testimony of Maureen Barry, MLS, Associate Professor, Library Teaching and Learning
Before the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee
Rep. Tom Young, Chair
March 11, 2025

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

My name is Maureen Barry. I am a product of Ohio public education (Westlake City Schools and Bowling Green State University), and a lifelong proponent for public education. I have also spent 20 years as a public educator (librarian) at Wright State University and Bowling Green State University. I write to you as a private citizen who is strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

I'm deeply concerned about the continued stripping of workers' rights in public institutions, and if this trend continues in Ohio, there will be significant furthering of brain drain in this state in the public higher institutions. This bill whittles away at bargaining protections for teachers' unions and is a farce of "protection". The bill both prohibits the ability for union negotiations to bargain about workload, while simultaneously requiring that workload policy be updated every 5 years. It is clear to me that the developers of bill SB 1 have little experience with how working and teaching actually happen in higher education. Our faculty are already stretched thin on their responsibilities, including the tenure and promotion process. We barely have enough faculty to be able to facilitate this process, and yet, the bill proposes to add additional post-tenure review requirements that will exacerbate this review process, forcing faculty to put more time into reviewing one another instead of dedicating time, effort, and energy into teaching their students. The policies and processes outlined in this bill regarding bureaucratic processes will directly harm students' education.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are important factors for many students to be able to feel like they belong in the campus community. How can students possibly succeed academically if they do not feel a sense of belonging, inclusion, and support? Furthermore, removing diversity, equity, and inclusion removes the ability of educators to expose students to diverse perspectives and viewpoints. In the end, Ohio's students who are able to earn a degree would graduate without experience communicating with people from diverse backgrounds and hinder their ability to contribute positively to the US and/or global workforce.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this discriminatory and damaging bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.