

Opponent Testimony for Senate Bill 1
House Committee on Higher Education

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Shaher Ahmad

Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and Members of the Higher Education Committee, I share my deep concerns as a Muslim parent about Senate Bill 1. This bill has raised significant apprehensions within the Muslim community regarding its potential impact on academic freedom, diversity, and the overall educational experience in Ohio.

As a parent committed to the well-being and education of my child, I am troubled by the implications of Senate Bill 1. Despite its purported goal of enhancing higher education, there are aspects of this bill that, in my opinion, pose a threat to the principles of inclusivity and academic freedom that are crucial for a comprehensive and enriching education.

Senate Bill 1, in its current form, appears to restrict the ability of educational institutions to provide a diverse and inclusive environment. The prohibition on certain topics and training methods may inadvertently limit students' exposure to a broad range of perspectives, hindering their ability to engage with complex issues and fostering an understanding of diverse viewpoints.

As a Muslim parent, I value an education that encourages critical thinking and the exploration of diverse perspectives, allowing my child to develop the skills needed to thrive in a globalized world. The administrative burdens introduced by the bill raise concerns about the potential redirection of resources away from academic programs. This shift could affect the quality and breadth of education offered by institutions in Ohio, impacting the ability of students, including those from the Muslim community, to access a well-rounded education. The restrictions on academic relationships with China may also limit opportunities for students to engage with international perspectives, hindering their development as global citizens.

I am worried about the broader implications of Senate Bill 1 for the Muslim community and all Ohioans. The bill's potential to make Ohio less attractive for students, faculty, and researchers could negatively impact the diversity and vibrancy of our educational institutions.

In conclusion, I urge the committee to carefully consider the concerns of Muslim parents like myself and to reconsider the potential impact of Senate Bill 1 on the educational experiences of our children. I appreciate your attention to this matter and hope that you prioritize the preservation of academic freedom and inclusivity within Ohio's higher education system.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,

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