

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

My name is Barbara Daly, PhD, RN, and I am writing both as a faculty member with 40 years of experience and as a very concerned citizen and constituent. Senate Bill 1, as passed by the Senate and now under your consideration in the House, is intended to improve higher education. However, it contains many proposed regulations and requirements that will, in fact, actually detract from the goals of higher education - supporting acquisition of knowledge and development of critical thinking.

Specifically, the material that appears to be attempting to assure that students are not limited in expressing a variety of opinions about any topic, including politically and historically controversial events and issues, will actually seriously interfere with the goals of encouraging debate and discussion. The bill, in its current form, makes no distinction between opinion (which should be free) and misinformation and counterfactual claims, which should be rightfully challenged. Students learn best when engaged in appropriate, guided debate. The restrictions in the bill are quite likely to lead to faculty simply avoiding controversial topics for fear of being seen as violating the bill's provisions. This serves neither the students nor the country well. Misinformation is a growing problem in our society as current government authorities seem to have abandoned any obligation to be truthful.

The requirement for "civic literacy" course is unnecessary and inappropriate. First, the proposed subjects and resources should be used at the high school level. Waiting for college is too late. Second, it is inappropriate for legislators, with little to no teaching experience or preparation in higher education, to design curricula.

Finally, the extensive detailed requirements for syllabi are, again, not needed. Given the universal use of digital posting in today's world, syllabi are already on line for all students and members of the college/university. There is no need to make these available to the public. As I'm sure you know, there is a disturbing increase in use of social media to disseminate false information and accuse individuals of misdeeds with no basis whatsoever. Making syllabi available to the public serves no purpose and only provides yet another avenue for inappropriate personal attacks on faculty.

Finally, these rules and regulations will surely discourage faculty candidates from applying to state institutions. Private institutions, who already offer higher salaries in many instances, will seem much more attractive.

I implore you to reject Senate Bill 1 in its current form. Thank you for your attention.

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