



TransOhio, Inc.  
P.O. Box 18272  
Cleveland, Ohio 44118  
transohio@transohio.org

Workforce and Higher Education Committee  
1 Capitol Square  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
rep37@ohiohouse.gov

March 9th, 2025

RE: SB1 "Enact Advance Ohio Higher Education Act" - *oppositional testimony*

Dear Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and fellow respected Committee Members:

SB 1 being a state law would be a disastrous blow to the future of higher education in Ohio, and it will stand to make outcomes worse for students, faculty, and the future employers of those students. Despite the described intent of this bill to promote intellectual diversity, we know it's a thinly veiled attempt to control what gets taught and how. We've been told time and time again that removing "diversity, equity, and inclusion" isn't the goal, and that we're overreacting. But we see exactly what's going on, we see the federal level push to remove rights, history and access for so many including women, immigrants, Black people, and disabled, in addition to trans people.

However, that doesn't mean it's too late to set Ohio apart; you, our representatives, don't need to lock step with what you see happening in the Senate or at the federal level. SB1 aims to ban any and all DEI efforts: no matter the scale, no matter how big or small, no matter who may be affected. This bill would not "advance higher education," it would restrict academic freedoms and increase bureaucracy.

Faculty will be forced to censor themselves, leaving out critical content to avoid potentially offending a single student who might file a complaint that threatens their job. Worse yet,

professors will be pressured to give balanced space to views that are hateful, history that is wrong, and policies that harm the most marginalized. A straightforward reading of this bill makes it clear: if you teach the Holocaust, then you'll also have to teach Holocaust denial; if you discuss the civil rights movement, you'll also have to teach that slavery was good; if you teach science, you'll have to teach pseudoscience as if it were the same level as peer-reviewed research. It's ridiculous, dangerous, and the scope of this harm will be felt in ripples we can't fully predict.

Why would anyone, regardless of their political leanings, want to work in a state where their rights are being stripped away, where they're micromanaged from the statehouse, and where they're expected to teach lies in the name of "balance"? Ohio's higher education institutions will only continue to lose top talent to other states if this bill goes through. Ohio will only further the brain drain already in progress affecting Ohio businesses because of policies from this Statehouse. We should be giving Ohio students the opportunity to learn, grow, and explore their own values—not subjecting them to vague and arbitrary control that stifles intellectual freedom.

Do the right thing for this state, for its future, and for its students, reject SB1.

TransOhio urges you, on behalf of the greater trans community, to stop the politicalization of our existence. We'll continue to exist no matter the laws the statehouse passes, and attempts to remove us from public education like SB1 cast such a wide net in that attempt that all students and faculty will be harmed intellectually and emotionally.

We urge you to **vote no**. Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact us with any questions. We welcome further discussion.

Respectfully,

TransOhio Board of Directors and Executive Director