

Written-Only Opponent Testimony for SB 1
House Workforce and Higher Education Committee Hearing on March 11, 2025
Stephanie L. Ash, MSW, LSW, Esq. (she/her)
steph@stephanieash.net

Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and members of the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony. My name is Stephanie Ash (she/her) and I am a licensed attorney and social worker here in Ohio. I serve as the Region 3 (Cleveland area) Co-Director on the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Ohio Chapter Board. I am also a member of the NASW Ohio Social Work Criminalization Task Force. I write to voice my strong opposition to SB 1.

Knowledge is power. You already know this though, or else you would not be spending so much time, effort, and resources trying to police what is taught in public colleges and universities (and with the recent introduction of HB 155/SB 113, K-12 public schools too). Instead of promoting the “intellectual diversity” proponents claim to value, SB 1 chills protected First Amendment speech by proposing a comprehensive surveillance system where professors and schools can be reported for teaching “controversial concepts” and will be forced to obey under the threat of State repression. It should not be controversial to teach that slavery was inhumane, abortion is healthcare, Russia invaded Ukraine, the Holocaust happened, Nazis are bad, and climate change is real. There is nothing “intellectual” about denying these facts. There is nothing “intellectual” about affording equal weight to “both sides” of these concepts. There is nothing “intellectual” about gaslighting Ohioans that SB 1 is linked to anything intellectual at all. **This is totalitarianism.**

More than 1,000 pieces of opposition testimony was submitted for the one and only Senate Higher Education Committee hearing where opponents were permitted to testify. Over 200 people waited 8.5 hours to testify and voice their opposition to this wildly unpopular piece of legislation. And yet, the Senate swiftly voted SB 1 out of Committee and through the Senate without stopping to consider the voice of the People. You, as the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee, have the power to stop and listen to the People. You have the power to stop this bill from becoming law. You have the power to stand up to State oppression. **History has its eyes on you.**

I urge the Committee to vote NO on SB 1 in its entirety, or at the very least, introduce an amendment to provide an exception to these oppressive requirements for programs whose accreditation will be negatively impacted. Instead of trying to control knowledge like the totalitarian regimes in our history books, your time would be better spent actually helping Ohioans.