

Good Morning. Thank you Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and members of the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee for allowing me to testify today. My name is Kelly Gallagher and I am writing to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bill 1.

I am a PhD Student at The Ohio State University, and I write now to speak only for myself, not in affiliation with the University. At OSU I have thus far received a quality education and have been satisfied with both the academic and financial opportunities here. In the first two years of my five year program, I have received both institutional and federal grants to support my studies in the Department of Slavic and Eastern European Languages and Literatures. However, I am deeply concerned about how SB1 will negatively impact the Ohio economy and thus the opportunities at OSU. We will lose our competitive edge in the world of higher education and our ability to recruit students with stories like mine.

When I applied to graduate programs, I got into 5 programs: Ohio State, UW-Madison, University of Michigan, Northwestern University, and Brown University. The Slavic program at OSU worked hard to recruit me, offering me a University Fellowship reserved for particularly desirable students. But it was ultimately not the Fellowship that persuaded me. In spring 2023, I chose OSU because I believed I would receive the best education here. I believed I would have a wide range of academic opportunities at my fingertips. I chose OSU even when other schools offered me significantly more money (the salary at OSU is barely a living wage and I rely on savings to make ends meet), because I was more impressed by the quality of the education at OSU and by my intellectual compatibility with the professors here. So far, I have been very happy with my decision.

However, if I were applying to graduate schools in Fall 2025, and SB1/HB6 had gone into effect, I would not be able to make the same decision I did in 2023. And if SB1/HB6 does go into effect, I will be forced to consider pursuing my education elsewhere, despite my love for OSU. If my professors leave in search of better opportunities, if funding opportunities dry up, if the school's commitment to academic freedom buckles, then OSU will no longer be the school I chose over its competition.

SB1 is an attack on higher education in Ohio—and so if it is passed, it is safe to say Ohio will no longer be able to offer an intellectual environment attractive to ambitious students. I would not be the only person to consider leaving, and the economic impact will hurt all Ohioans.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony today. I urge you to vote NO on this bill before it harms the economic stability and quality education in Ohio.