

Testimony of Janice Lanier, JD, RN
Before the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee
March 11, 2025

Chairman Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and members of the Higher Education Committee:

My name is Janice Lanier, and I am writing to express **strong opposition** to Senate Bill 1 (SB 1). Its legislative journey is quite enlightening as well as disturbing. It bears repeating because it illustrates how far afield some members of the General Assembly have strayed from the role taxpayers—both republicans AND democrats—believe they were elected to fulfill.

SB 1 was introduced January 22, 2025, into the Ohio Senate. It received its first hearing before the Senate Higher Education Committee January 29th at which time 15 individuals (including the bill's sponsor Senator Jerry Cirino) testified in support of the bill. On February 11th the bill had its second hearing when literally hundreds of people either testified in person or submitted written opponent testimony. On February 12th immediately after the unprecedented show of opposition, the committee recommended passage of the bill along party lines, and the full senate approved it that same day. with only two republicans joining the democrats in opposition. The bill is now before the Ohio House and it is having the same rush treatment it did in the Senate. The sponsor opines that the bill was fully vetted as SB 83 before the 135th General Assembly so legislators of the 136th General Assembly are fully aware and supportive of the provisions contained in the current bill.

In fact, when asked how the testimony of so many opponents can be ignored by those elected to represent all the people of Ohio, Sen. Cirino responded, "Legislation is not developed based on how many people come to testify. If we started doing that it would be a popularity contest, and we should all take a pay cut because we're getting paid, in my view, to make policies sometimes, whether it's popular or not, if we think it is the right thing to do and good for the state of Ohio." In other words, the members of the General Assembly are not there to "represent" the people but to force the people to march in lockstep agreement with elected officials who somehow "know better".

SB 1 is not about improving education; it is a **politically motivated** attack that threatens academic freedom, weakens workforce development, and prioritizes ideology over facts. If passed, SB 1 will have **devastating consequences** for Ohio's higher education system, workforce, and economy. Others will document in detail all the things this bill will do to make a degree from one of Ohio's colleges or universities a pathetic joke. Rather than being representative of a well-educated individual capable of making thoughtful decisions in a rapidly changing world; a degree from Ohio will signify someone who was carefully taught not to question or challenge or ever wander outside the safe unimaginative boundaries of the status quo. Surely, we can do better than that.