

Testimony of David P. Fuhry, PhD  
Before the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee  
Rep. Tom Young, Chair  
March 11, 2025

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

My name is David P. Fuhry, and I am a graduate of Kent State (BS, MS) and Ohio State (PhD) where I subsequently taught as a Senior Lecturer for 3 years. I do not represent either Ohio State or Kent State, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen.

During my studies I served as a student representative in my department's Faculty Search Committee. SB 1's intrusions into free speech in our classrooms, as well as tenure policies, would make it more difficult to attract top educators and researchers.

SB 1's confusing language defining a controversial policy uses circular logic ("... controversial means any belief or policy that is the subject of political controversy ...") then cherry-picks several narrow examples as well as several extremely broad ones. It defines intellectual diversity as "multiple, divergent, and varied perspectives" and requires that an institution shall "ensure the fullest degree of intellectual diversity". The fullest degree of multiple perspectives doesn't facilitate factual discussion on straightforward social & ethical topics such as that plagiarism is wrong and will harm your career and field.

The fuzzy contradictions in SB 1 will make it difficult to have useful classroom discussions since every statement, lesson, worksheet, quiz, and exam would be subject to the unclear requirements of this bill.

Its treatment of DEI initiatives violates both individuals' and Universities' First Amendment rights to freedom of expression. Common DEI initiatives are lawful under prevailing federal civil rights laws and Supreme Court precedent.

SB 1 creates far more problems than it solves and would negatively impact our state-supported institutions of higher education and their students. For this reason I urge you to reject Senate Bill 1.