

**Opponent Testimony for Senate Bill 1**  
**Before the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee**  
**Rep. Tom Young, Chair**  
**March 11, 2025**

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

Thank you for allowing me to submit my testimony. My name is Jennifer Batton.

I am writing this testimony in opposition of Senate Bill 1. I am a lifelong proud Ohioan. I have served my great state as the former education director of the state government office, the Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management, serving all of Ohio's public schools, colleges and universities. I also served as a professor and a college administrator in Ohio. In addition, I received my undergraduate degree, my masters degree, and as of this month, my doctorate, from three of Ohio's finest colleges and universities.

There are several sections of this bill that are detrimental to our colleges and universities as written, including Sec. 3345.0216 and Sec. 3345.0217. This bill, if passed, would negatively impact the reputations of our universities as the bill would impede the quality of education our institutions are able to deliver, lead to a removal of the coveted Carnegie Classification, Research 1 Institution designation, and as a result, significantly reduce the number of students selecting to attend college or university in Ohio. This would also significantly reduce revenue in our communities, as colleges and universities are major revenue generators across our state. According to an independent study commissioned by the Inter-University Council of Ohio (IUC), Ohio's 14 public colleges and universities in FY 2021-2022 generated \$68.9 billion in total economic impact. "That impact represents 8.8% of Ohio's total gross state product. The study also found that activities of the public universities and their students support 866,782 jobs – one in eight Ohio jobs" (Inter-University Council of Ohio, 2024).

In Senate Bill 1, Lines 610 - 613, define what could not be taught, "controversial belief or policy' means any belief or policy that is the subject of political controversy, including issues such as climate policies, electoral politics, foreign policy, diversity, equity, and inclusion...". If this language is left in the bill, the negative impacts will include, but not be limited to:

- **Unnecessary death and physical suffering of fellow Ohioans.** By not allowing professors in our medical schools to teach accurate science based information, such as about well researched life-saving vaccines (measles, covid, tuberculosis and flu vaccines), medical students will not be provided with education that can prevent death and unnecessary suffering. Vaccines in the U.S. are viewed by some as "politically controversial," so according to this bill, the content would not be allowed to be taught in our colleges and universities.

- **Inaccurately delivered healthcare to my fellow Ohioans.** On March 3, 2025, the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services responding to the measles outbreak in Texas noted that they will “provide culturally competent education” to communities. According to Senate Bill 1, our medical schools would not be able to teach future medical staff any content related to DEI, so our universities and colleges could not teach students how to tailor their methods to provide “culturally competent care”.
- **Erasure of my fellow Ohioans' role in our country's history.** When I lead courses in teacher education I could not teach about Ohio's proud legacy serving our country during WWII if I included the role that women like Rosie Koolish, my Grandmother's friend from Mogadore, Ohio played in building Corsair aircraft in the Akron, Ohio airdocks. That would be DEI.
- **Lack of ability to learn how to read and speak English accurately.** In teacher education, I would not be able to prepare future teachers to optimally teach children with varying abilities how best to learn to read, such as English Language Learners, as that might be considered DEI as this bill is written.
- **Lose of significant revenue for the state.** Ohio State University, of all colleges in the U.S., ranks in the top 20 in the U.S. for the number of international students. Tailoring supports and services for students based on ethnicity, would not be allowed under this bill as that would be DEI. These non-U.S. students, from diverse ethnic backgrounds, also pay more than U.S. students to attend college. Losing international students would result in large reductions in income.

It has been an honor and privilege to work with 1200+ of our wonderfully diverse public schools, and to work in various capacities over the years with 26+ of our colleges and universities. When engaging with people across the country and around the world, I always brag about why their child, or they themselves, should attend one of our many distinguished colleges and universities. If this bill passes, one of Ohio's greatest sources of pride, and a significant revenue generator, will be irreparably damaged as our professors and researchers will not be allowed to teach the latest science, base their teaching in facts, and help best prepare students to engage effectively in a global economy, with different cultures and ways of life. This bill will lead to a significant brain drain of not only the best and the brightest students, but also, the best and the brightest faculty, staff, administrators and researchers!

I ask that you please consider my testimony and vote AGAINST Senate Bill 1 as written.

Thank you. I am happy to answer any questions you might have.

#### **Reference:**

Inter-University Council of Ohio. (2024). *Study Shows Ohio's Public Universities Delivered \$68.9 Billion in Economic Impact*

<https://iuc-ohio.org/study-shows-ohios-public-universities-delivered-68-9-billion-in-economic-impact/>