

March 10, 2025

The Honorable Tom Young, Chairman

House Workforce and Higher Education Committee

1 Capitol Square

Columbus, Ohio 43215

I am writing to express my opposition to SB 1. This bill is a clumsy, heavy-handed attempt at controlling Ohio's universities in order to force them into political submission. It is difficult to think of a more calculated political maneuver – targeting new voters and generations of future voters by removing freedom of speech and expression from the very places they are taught to challenge their own ideas and think for themselves – all under the guise of removing politics from college campuses. The bill is a wolf in sheep's clothing. It purports to maintain freedom of speech, when in fact it stifles all academic discussion of any topic deemed “political.” It claims to ameliorate college admissions based on racial quotas, when in fact this practice is already illegal. Finally, it champions the concept of “intellectual diversity,” while ensuring that any actual diversity on Ohio's campuses is stomped out.

Of particular concern is the fact that this bill seems to have no guardrails in place. Much of the bill forbids programs aimed at “diversity, equity, and inclusion” without providing a legal definition of the concept. How far can these bans go? Proponents of SB 1 seem content to leave that to the Courts to decide. And while “intellectual diversity” is defined in the bill, it seems to require Ohio's professors to acknowledge perspectives that are “on the wrong side of history” at best, and dangerously incorrect at worst. Does this concept apply equally to a history lecture as it does to a medical school? If so, the results could be disastrous.

SB 1 pitches government control over Ohio's higher education as the solution to a problem that does not exist. In trying to keep politics out of Ohio's universities, proponents of SB 1 have done the opposite. True “intellectual diversity” comes from efforts aimed at increasing access to higher education, not content control. For the sake of our students, professors, and all Ohioans who will someday rely on an Ohio-educated professional, I ask that you reject SB 1.

Thank you,

Tatum Goetz-Isaacs