

Testimony of Amanda Hanley (M.A. Mathematics)
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:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide opponent testimonial on SB-1. My name is Amanda Hanley and I am a professor of Mathematics at Cuyahoga Community College. I have taught for over twenty years, but I do not represent Tri-C with my testimonial. Rather, I am submitting as a private citizen encouraging you to reject SB-1. Senate Bill 1, much like its predecessor, Senate Bill 83, is full of confusing language and provisions that seem more focused on stirring up cultural debates than solving real issues in higher education. While there are many problems with this bill, I want to focus on two key points: the attack on tenure and the restriction of the right to strike.

One of the most concerning parts of SB 1 is how it weakens the system of tenure. Tenure exists to protect professors from being fired unfairly for their ideas or research. Without it, faculty could face dismissal simply for expressing unpopular opinions or pursuing research that challenges the status quo. This would make professors afraid to teach freely, and universities would lose the independence and intellectual freedom that make them vital institutions. Without tenure, we risk turning universities into places where professors must cater to political or monetary interests, rather than focus on fostering critical thinking and advancing knowledge.

SB 1 also attacks faculty's right to strike, which is a crucial tool for negotiating fair wages and better working conditions. Strikes allow professors to stand up for what is best for their students and their profession. By limiting this right, SB 1 weakens the ability of faculty to fight for the resources and support they need to do their jobs well. This will harm the quality of education and lead to frustration and burnout among teachers.

Ultimately, SB 1 is a threat to both academic freedom and faculty rights. In a state where funding for educational institutions is largely allocated by completion rates, it is imperative that the instructors on the front lines be as protected as they can to preserve integrity and mitigate grade inflation. If the bill passes, it will make it harder for professors to teach and advocate for students who rely on us. If lawmakers genuinely want to improve higher education, they should focus on supporting faculty, not restricting their rights. This bill needs to be rejected.