

Testimony Opposing SB 1/HB 6  
House Workforce & Higher Education Committee  
March 11, 2025

Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and members of the House Workforce & Higher Education Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Sandra Fiehrer, I live in Dublin (OH 86). I'm a graduate of Columbus City Schools & proud Ohio State University alum. Each year, I volunteer with the brightest student leaders at OSU. Both of our children graduated from Ohio public schools and attended The Ohio State University and I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6 because they will destroy the reputation of highly respected Ohio universities and colleges like OSU. These bills will cost Ohioans a lot of money and hurt the economy. Is that honestly your goal?

Ohio ranks 39th in higher education<sup>1</sup> today and my alma mater ranks 41st in National Public Universities<sup>2</sup>.

As a first generation college student, I had the opportunity to attend a smaller, private, Ohio college or The Ohio State University. I chose OSU *because* it is diverse and inclusive and so is the curriculum. I graduated from a Columbus City School where mandatory desegregation busing was implemented by a US Federal Court decision. I lived this history and it shaped me as a person. This bill wants to pretend that didn't happen. Writing laws like this that ban people from learning about it won't make history disappear. I don't want to see Ohio go backwards on my tax dollars! Ohioans like me want our public universities to excel, we want the talent to come here and stay here. That benefits ALL of us! SB1 and HB 6 will NOT make our public higher education stronger, they will make us less competitive in the world. Over 1,000 Ohioans submitted testimony against SB 1 in the Senate. Hundreds of those people showed up to testify in-person. Only 14 people sent in supporter testimony. This is SB83 reconstituted and Ohioans told you NO last year.

Requiring instructors to post their syllabi and contact info on public websites will potentially lead to threats & harassment against educators from outside political groups. This bill has policies that could lead to department shut down because one student dropped a class, students could find themselves suddenly without classes they need to enter their field and colleges could terminate classes and programs without valid cause. Many educators would be left without job security and post-tenure review would essentially end meaningful tenure in Ohio. Ohio would lose top tier professors to states that offer tenure and this has happened already with a friend of mine who taught at The Ohio State University. She went to Yale. There have been dozens of op-eds and testimonies from students saying they will leave Ohio or refuse to come to Ohio if SB 1 passes. We need to attract more talent to Ohio not drive them out.<sup>3</sup>

As policy is written in this bill, allowing students to ignore expertise, facts and history on "controversial topics" is dangerous. Educators must teach facts, not a political agenda. SB1 and HB6 could lead to medical students endangering our lives because they lack the necessary skills to address outcomes for different patient communities. These bills seek to justify a climate where any answer is correct. SB1 & HB6 aim to create a policy where instructors cannot correct students who don't believe events like the Holocaust happened or

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/ohio>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/oh?\\_sort=rank&\\_sortDirection=asc](https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/oh?_sort=rank&_sortDirection=asc)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dispatch.com/story/opinion/editorials/2024/11/11/ohio-shrinking-population-solutions-needed/75839793007/>

students who state incorrect information on a project or test. This disastrous policy makes it nearly impossible to teach about historical events. While SB1 states: "faculty and staff will not attempt to indoctrinate any social, political, or religious view," it appears that's exactly what it does.

SB 1 is government overreach that allows politicians to decide how Ohio's public universities are allowed to operate and what they are allowed to teach and it will lead to the death of expertise. The policies in this bill will impact the ability to teach accurate history by pretending systemic racism, inherited wealth, white privilege and other important concepts didn't exist. I grew up during the civil rights movement. I'm appalled that you would think politicians are more qualified to dictate how to teach history and complex topics than expert educators. The students I volunteer with are leaders in organizations for women, greek life, culture, black students, LGBTQ+ students, nationalities, specific studies and professions and for outreach to specific communities. I enjoyed belonging to a sorority in college and joined numerous organizations. These harmful policies in SB 1 are an attempt to erase spaces for student organizations that focus on advancing success for certain communities. Every student should be able to achieve success and find a place to connect and belong. This makes them better leaders and equips them for life after graduation. SB1 & HB 6 do the opposite.

For all of these reasons, I strongly oppose SB1. It's a broad effort to destroy public higher education in Ohio. I'm incensed you propose a bill with the potential to ban classes, curriculum, and/or reading materials that focus on understanding the history or cultural contributions of certain groups or communities. Higher education is not a place for indoctrination, yet this bill includes many policies that do just that. I grew up attending segregated schools here in Ohio. Desegregation busing and a diverse public university were experiences that prepared me for success in the world. I chose The Ohio State University for diversity of majors, ideas, cultures, leadership and opportunities. These bills would eliminate the diversity that draws students, faculty and researchers to Ohio in tremendous numbers. If this bill passes, our state would lose students, faculty, researchers, billions of dollars in grants, tourism, jobs and our international reputation. The cost is enormous! YOU can't erase diversity by pretending it doesn't exist and telling educators they must do the same. These bills will hurt Ohio's economy. You need to stop trying to dismantle public education in Ohio. I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this destructive, discriminatory extremist bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.