

Testimony of Bridget Kriner, Ph.D.
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 Bridget Kriner, and I am a professor of English at Cuyahoga Community College, where I have taught for 15 years. I do not represent Cuyahoga Community College, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen. I am also an alumna or previously attended Cleveland State University, University of Toledo, and Lakeland Community College. Further, I am a lifelong Ohio resident and parent to two elementary school children attending Ohio public schools.

Thank you for considering my written testimony to the harms Senate Bill 1. I vigorously oppose this legislation because it represents an unprecedented overreach into higher education, undermines academic freedom, and restricts the ability of institutions to prepare students for a globalized world.

As I have indicated, I have strong opposition to Senate Bill 1—my opposition stems from experience as a faculty member at a large community college in the state of Ohio. I have been teaching at this institution for more than fifteen years. I can say unequivocally that my work is the most rewarding and fulfilling experience of my professional life. What makes my work so remarkable is that I get to be a part of helping people in my community find a fulfilling and rewarding career of their own—and along the way, economic stability. In my years of doing this work, I have worked with students on their way to becoming nurses, automotive technicians, court reporters, and transferring to four-year colleges in Ohio and beyond. By dictating how and what we teach, this bill weakens Ohio's ability to attract top-tier educators and students. The success of Ohio's higher education system depends on intellectual freedom, not political mandates. I urge you to oppose this bill in the interest of our students, our institutions, and the future of Ohio's workforce. Senate Bill 1 in its current iteration threatens my ability to do my work as an Ohio Community College professor.

As a parent, I want my children to receive the best education possible, one that prepares them to think critically, engage in meaningful discourse, and navigate an increasingly diverse world. This bill seeks to inject political oversight into university curriculums, stripping institutions of their ability to provide a robust and independent education. The elimination of DEI programs sends a message that Ohio does not value inclusion and equal opportunity. Moreover, the removal of collective bargaining rights for faculty members could destabilize our universities, making it harder to attract and retain quality educators. I want Ohio to be a place where my children can receive a top-tier education and find meaningful careers, but this bill jeopardizes that possibility.

I am testifying today because I believe Senate Bill 1 will limit my ability to continue to provide students in Ohio with the highest quality education and because as a parent, I am deeply concerned about the viability of my children's future education in the state of Ohio. Senate Bill 1 will undoubtedly diminish the quality of Ohio Higher Education, which means I and many other parents like me will have to enroll my children at an out-of-state institution.

I implore you to vote no on Senate Bill 1 while it is still in the hands of the Senate Higher Education committee.

Thank you for your time in reading and considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

Bridget Kriner