

Opponent Testimony for Senate Bill 1 House Committee on Higher Education DATE: March 9, 2025
FROM: Ross Berkal TO: Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and
Members of the Higher Education Committee: As an Ohio resident I am understandably troubled by
proposed Senate Bill 1. The bill has come into being not as is claimed in furtherance of the State's
educational mission but, instead, as a political tool seeking to quash discourse contrary to the
agenda of the current administration and its supporters (including non-U.S./foreign influences). The
bill poses a grave threat to Ohio's academic freedom, inclusivity, and diversity. In its current form,
Senate Bill 1 seeks to restrict, if not bar outright, the ability of educational institutions to provide a
diverse and inclusive educational environment. The Bill's prohibition of multiple topics, training
methods and the like, seeks to limit student exposure to a broad range of perspectives, hindering
students' ability to engage with complex, relevant issues as well as develop an unbiased
understanding of diverse viewpoints. The bill raises justifiable and serious concerns regarding the
potential redirection of resources away from certain academic programs. Such an outcome would
have a wide, negative impact on the quality and range of education offered by Ohio institutions. It
would impact the ability of students, particularly those from the Muslim community, to access a
sound, unbiased, and broadly-based education. Similarly, restrictions on academic relationships
with China would likewise impose undesirable limits upon opportunities for students to engage
with international perspectives, once again hindering students' development as global citizens.
Senate Bill 1 is a profound negative for all Ohioans. I strongly urge the Committee to carefully
consider the concerns identified above, as well as those of my fellow Ohioans, and to fulfill its
obligation as stewards of academic freedom and inclusivity in our state's higher education system.
Very truly yours.