

Testimony of Madeleine Charles-Carlin, M.Ed.
Before the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee
Rep. Tom Young, Chair
March 11, 2025

Dear Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and members of the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee,

First and foremost, thank you for allowing me to testify today. Although I cannot be there in person, I am thankful for our democratic system, which allows voices to be heard across the state of Ohio.

My name is Madeleine Charles-Carlin. I was born, raised, and educated in Ohio. I am also a former elementary school teacher and a current Ph.D. student at the University of Cincinnati. As a graduate student, SB 1 would significantly and negatively impact my graduate education and future career plans. Therefore, I strongly oppose SB 1 and ask you to vote “NO” on this bill today.

SB 1 severely infringes academic freedom and the right to a democratic education. This bill mandates what and how professors teach, thus controlling what can be discussed in university classroom spaces and further inhibiting challenging conversations among educators, students, and their peers. Political scientist Deborah Stone states, “Education builds and teaches how to be within the community... Children of different backgrounds come to respect each other and get along. Education builds the social harmony and civic skills necessary for democracy” (Stone, 2012, p. 60). Based on Stone’s words, how can we learn to respect each other and build the social harmony necessary for a successful democracy when our government attempts to control what is taught and discussed in university classrooms? Without academic freedom, there is no building of social harmony; thus, we have failed our democracy.

In addition to hindering academic freedom and our democracy, SB 1 has the potential to harm university faculty. Forcing professors to publicly publish each course syllabus containing their schedule, qualifications, and contact information is terrifying. The bill's syllabi requirements could lead to harassment from the public and provide the public with ways to contact and physically know when and where the class meets. This infringement on the privacy of university professors and faculty is unacceptable. Further, SB 1 attacks workers' rights by prohibiting fundamental collective bargaining subjects and the right to strike for faculty, who should have the right to advocate for themselves and their students.

Finally, after graduating from the doctoral program, I plan to pursue a career in higher education. As a lifelong Ohioan, I hope to seek employment at universities within the state. However, if this bill passes, I will absolutely *not* pursue university employment in Ohio. Additionally, I will not send my future children to Ohio universities, as a degree from these institutions will lose significant value if SB 1 does pass. This bill will cause Ohio to lose many wonderful educators and students who share similar sentiments, which will negatively impact Ohio’s economy.

I urgently ask you to consider my testimony and vote “NO” on this harmful, unlawful, and undemocratic bill. Thank you again for this opportunity to provide written testimony.

Sincerely,

Madeleine Charles-Carlin, M.Ed.