

March 9, 2025

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

I am writing to you in opposition to Senate Bill 1, The Advance Ohio Higher Education Act.

I attended the first House Committee hearing of this legislation on March 4th at the Ohio Statehouse and witnessed committee members posing questions to Senator Cirino. My emphatic response is: Do your job, Chair Young, and do it with respect toward your colleagues and the people of the State of Ohio. Witnessing the indifferent responses to questions from committee members, and very rude insistence on proper etiquette in asking Senator Cirino questions through permission from Chair Young, was unsettling.

Critiques of the bill have been shared by Senate and House members and hundreds of voters in Ohio, with amendments presented and discounted. Amendments made to its predecessor bill, SB 83, have been removed from this reintroduced legislation, yet Senator Cirino argues that no amendments will be considered because the legislation is “mature” and was thoroughly debated during the last General Assembly. Serious concerns have been raised, by committee members and Ohio voters, about a lack of data to support the changes in policy as well as a lack of clearly enforceable definitions of banned practices, not to mention the attack on labor rights.

As elected members of an Ohio legislative body, your job is to represent the citizens of Ohio and to work collaboratively with your colleagues and experts who can provide professional insight into the policies you consider. In this case, that means considering the expertise of a broad representation of faculty and administrators in higher education, who are not a “third party” as Senator Cirino indicated.

I also discourage you from accepting Senator Cirino’s assertion that students are customers. While education costs money and employees of colleges and universities help to facilitate students as they acquire new credentials, students are not purchasing a product or service but are investing in an education, with a great personal responsibility and investment of time for required study, practice, and reflection.

You represent the people’s house. Your job requires respectful consideration of the questions and testimony offered through your committee and its hearings.

Sincerely,



Ingrid Emch, Professor