

Opponent Testimony for SB 1 – Written-Only
House Workforce and Higher Education Committee
March 11, 2025

Natalie A. Noyes
Constituent from Lancaster, Ohio

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

Thank you for considering my testimony. My name is Natalie Noyes, and I am a lifelong resident of Ohio. I practiced law for seven years before switching careers and I am now an independently licensed professional clinical counselor. I attended Ohio schools for most of my higher education and continue to serve Ohioans. **I strongly oppose SB 1 and ask you to vote NO.**

I spent seven years working within the criminal justice system, primarily as a defense attorney. I was required to provide competent legal advice to my clients, even those whose actions or beliefs I found morally repugnant. I made a similar commitment when I became an independently licensed counselor. There are times where referrals are necessary and appropriate, but I still treat a variety of people with a variety of backgrounds. Even those clients with whom I share many identities and experiences, often offer different needs or perspectives. My concern with the language of SB 1 is limiting the viewpoints students are exposed to in their education. In particular, my concern is that certain viewpoints, those that dominate the party in power's views, are tolerated but many topics, such as climate policies, electoral politics, foreign policy, diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, immigration policy, marriage, or abortion, may not be discussed in the classroom. I could not competently do my job, and could not have done my previous job, without training and practice in having difficult conversations.

The language of SB 1 seems to suggest that educating our students on a variety of topics, with a variety of viewpoints, would somehow cause harm. I have never been harmed by having academic discussions and critiques of theories and policies. Many of my classmates, particularly in law school, did not share my perspectives. We found ways to respectfully debate and have dialogue, under the guidance of our professor, who could step in if appropriate. It prepared me to work in the adversarial field of law where the prosecution and defense must each fulfill their duties, and it helped prepare me for the more collaborative field of counseling where there may be challenges to thought patterns, but counselors are not to force their beliefs onto their clients. My careers would have been made infinitely harder by censoring

my educational experiences and denying me the opportunity to hear differing viewpoints and learn respectful ways to engage in dialogue.

As a recipient of an excellent education from Ohio schools, I would be remiss if I did not speak up when tenets of that education are threatened. Censoring material in education is irresponsible at best and dangerous at worst. Laws like SB 1 would set a precedent for whatever group holds political power to set the tone for all educational materials. This is not the intellectual diversity SB 1 purports to support. Instead, it is blatant censorship led by the dominant politicians within our state. Those politicians and their parties may change over the years, and I would oppose any bill that allows only certain topics or viewpoints to be discussed.

Ohio students and professors deserve to have genuine discourse on topics, without undue state interference. Thank you for allowing my voice to be heard. I ask you to consider my testimony and **vote NO on this harmful bill.**

Natalie A. Noyes

JD, LPCC