

Testimony of Jennifer Glaser, 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 Jennifer Glaser and I am a professor of English and the Chair of the English department at the University of Cincinnati, where I have taught for sixteen years. I do not represent the University of Cincinnati, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 1.

I have valued my years working at a top Ohio public university, and I am worried that the passing of Senate Bill 1 will harm the mission of our public institutions of higher education and create a two-tiered system in which rich students who can afford to attend private colleges will gain a better education than their working- or middle class- counterparts. I also worry—as the Chair of my department—that I will lose my young faculty to jobs in states where they will have more intellectual freedom. This brain drain of the best and brightest professors has happened in both Florida and Texas when similar legislation has been passed. Moreover, I am afraid that my colleagues in smaller departments will lose their jobs because they are not seen as economically viable and that the protections of tenure will essentially cease to exist, allowing faculty to be fired if they run afoul of an individual in a position of authority or say something about which a person with power does not agree.

I am the grandchild of Holocaust survivors. My grandfather survived Auschwitz and my grandmother Theresienstadt. The central value that they prized after their experiences in Nazi Germany and Nazi occupied Czechoslovakia was the value of intellectual freedom. I grew up hearing—over and over—that the freedom to teach and the freedom to learn were the safeguards of our democracy, that when governments got too involved in the workings of the university, the people were in trouble. I still believe these assertions to be true.

I have no doubt that there are educators on the extreme edges of both the left and right whose views do not reflect that of average Americans. I understand that this is part of what SB1 seeks to address. But, sometimes, in addressing the fringes, you forget about the majority. I know—from sixteen years of experience, seven of them as an administrator in my department—that the vast majority of educators have the same

goals that you have: they want what is best for their students and for the state of Ohio. They want to teach their students about literature and history and science and to send them into the world prepared to be good citizens with an understanding of the world around them. They want their students to get jobs, which is why UC has the top co-operative learning program in the country. SB1 will gut our Ohio educational system—the pride of our great state. It is bad for students, it is bad for parents, it is bad for educators, and it is bad for all Ohioans, regardless of their political beliefs .