

Testimony of Richard Ceci  
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 Richard Ceci, and I am an assistant professor of economics at Cuyahoga Community College (“Tri-C, Where Futures Begin”). To be clear, I do not represent Tri-C, but my many years of teaching at this wonderful community college cannot help but shape my testimony, even though I make this testimony as a private citizen. I believe that Senate Bill 1 has negative unintended consequences and should not be passed. In my 33 years of teaching economics at community colleges, ten years in Florida and the last 23 years in Ohio at Tri-C, I have done my best to help students learn about the efficiency of competitive markets and the important benefits of specialization and trade. Students learn that, as Adam Smith called it, the “invisible hand” involving multitudes of voluntary exchanges between buyers and sellers is an efficient method of allocating scarce resources, better than any price control scheme dictated by kings or central planners. I am not an Adam Smith scholar, but according to one such scholar, Adam Smith wrote that an important key to the economic success of a society is the need to have a government that provides a “tolerable administration of justice.” I think Smith would say this administration of justice includes the protection of private property and intellectual property rights, the protection of the rights of workers to enjoy the fruits of their labors, and in today’s economy, I also believe Adam Smith would support the protection of academic freedoms as part of the “tolerable administration of justice.” In economics class, we also examine the concepts of positive externalities and negative externalities. Education has positive externalities. The public support and encouragement of higher education has contributed to long run income growth and economic growth. Growth theory argues that investing in education increases human capital, leading to new technology that shifts our economy’s production function up due to increasing long run productivity. This has been a key factor in our income growth and economic growth. My concern is that Senate Bill 1 will have negative externalities, unintended harmful side effects that that will reduce education in Ohio and stifle research and development, slowing down Ohio’s potential long run income and growth. I have been lucky to have been able to teach a subject that I care about for 33 years, the principles of economics, to students I care about, with colleagues I care about, in a state that I care about. I started my teaching career in Florida, but I left after ten years to come to Ohio because of the good climate. Not the weather of course, but the good climate of academic freedom, and the good climate to be free to choose to be a part of collective bargaining. Ohio had this good climate 23 years ago. If Senate Bill 1 had been law back then, I would have remained a community college teacher in Florida. I have worked with many other dedicated college teachers who could have worked in other states but chose to help Ohio’s college students improve their human capital. I fear that passage of Senate Bill 1 will harm the educational climate in Ohio and will have the unintended consequence of slowing down Ohio’s potential long run income and growth.