

**Opponent Testimony for SB1
House Committee on Higher Education
3/9/2025**

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Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and Higher Education Committee Members. I oppose SB1 due to its potential impact on academic freedom, diversity, and the overall educational experience in Ohio.

As a mother of seven and grandmother to twelve, I've always believed that education should open minds, not close them. When I attended Purdue in the 1980s, I was encouraged to think critically, engage in open discussions, and learn from a variety of perspectives. That's the kind of education I want for my children and grandchildren. If SB 1 passes, professors will be forced to second-guess every word they say, afraid of upsetting one group or another instead of looking at all sides of any situation that is relevant including controversial international issues, historical events, and social movements—fundamental topics that foster critical thinking and well-rounded education. . **How can we expect our young people to develop strong critical thinking skills if universities are stripped of academic freedom? Without diversity of thought and the open exchange of ideas, the true benefits of higher education will be lost. We should be expanding learning opportunities, not restricting them.**

Who will want to come to a university in Ohio if our schools are seen as backward in their approach to education? Students and professors will choose institutions in other states where academic freedom is valued and challenging ideas are encouraged rather than suppressed. SB 1 will have far-reaching consequences beyond the classroom—a major blow to Ohio's economy. If this bill passes, we will lose students, professors, tuition dollars, and the economic benefits that come with a thriving university system. Fewer students mean fewer people spending money in college towns, fewer research grants, and fewer businesses supported by the university community. Tourism dollars from visiting families and academic conferences will dwindle. This bill doesn't just hurt education; it weakens the entire state.

For these reasons, I urge you to **oppose SB 1**. This bill will have lasting consequences, not only for students and educators but for Ohio's economy and reputation. Limiting academic freedom and diversity of thought will drive talent and resources away from our state, weakening our higher education system and the communities that depend on it. **I ask that you consider my testimony and vote no on SB 1** to protect the integrity of education in Ohio. **Thank you for your time and consideration.**