

Opponent Testimony for Senate Bill 1
House Committee on Higher Education
March 10, 2025

Mary Maryam Asraf

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

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in strong opposition to Senate Bill 1, The Advance Ohio Higher Education Act. My name is Mary Maryam Asraf, and I'm a proud Muslim alum of Cleveland State University and currently a healthcare worker at the Cleveland Clinic.

As someone who recently entered the workforce in Northeast Ohio, I'm grateful for the well-rounded education I received here. It helped shape my thinking, my values, and my career path. That's why I'm deeply concerned that SB 1 would restrict the kind of academic freedom that shaped who I am today.

Rather than fostering open dialogue, SB 1 threatens to narrow it and that harms students, educators, and our communities. It risks driving talent away from Ohio and imposing unnecessary limits on how students engage with complex ideas.

This bill sends a discouraging message that diverse perspectives, including those from people like me, are not welcome in our public universities. Ohio needs inclusive, vibrant campuses where students are exposed to a full range of ideas, not a censored or politicized version of learning.

I respectfully urge you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today.