

Testimony of Elizabeth Fridrick, MLIS, Librarian

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

My name is Elizabeth Fridrick and I'm a librarian who joined Bowling Green State University as a faculty member in August 2024. I do not represent my institution and I write you today as a private citizen. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6 and I urge all voting bodies to oppose and strike down these censoring, and counterproductive measures.

Among the many alarming components of this bill, is the sweeping demand to prohibit the efforts to facilitate equity and inclusion measures. These incredibly generalized terms carry tremendous weight in supporting students of all demographics who may experience learning challenges or differences. This general language also supports students who may be first generation college attendees from their families, and do not have the guidance of prior generations in navigating the complex structures of course schedules, working, and transitioning into adulthood.

The pointed attack on the tenure process, despite it already being an intensely documented and rigorous process, is incredibly disturbing and shortsighted, especially if the bill's intended purpose is to avoid "brain drain" from the state and region. Upending the already diligently structured and broadly recognized tenure status, coupled with the removal of faculty union's ability to collectively bargain, will make attracting and retaining top talent an impossible challenge for our public institutions, undermining the value of these respected institutions. This alone will push our youngest, brightest minds to seek better educational opportunities outside of the state, effectively accelerating and exacerbating Ohio's "brain drain" dilemma. Anyone serious about reducing and eliminating "brain drain" would invest in expansive, free public education measures, rather than restrict classroom conversations and professional recognition for faculty.

I ask you to consider my testimony and the thousands of other Ohioans who have submitted testimony, contacted your offices begging you to not pass this wasteful and destructive bill. Please vote NO on this destructive bill. It is clear that the people of Ohio will suffer under this bill and they are begging you, their representatives to stop wasting our tax dollars on your controlling legislative measures.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.