

Testimony of Amy Kelly
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 Amy Kelly, I am submitting testimony as a private citizen.

I am a lifelong Ohioan and mother of two college students. Both attend universities in Ohio. My husband and I also graduated from universities in Ohio. I am writing in opposition of Ohio SB1. This bill is said to reform and enhance Ohio education. The limitations it wants to impose will do the opposite.

Universities are places where people can and should expand their minds, learn about the world around them, and engage in healthy debate. Some of my most memorable classes were those where differing viewpoints created vibrant discussion. I had classmates that were from different countries, different parts of the nation, different religions, different sexual orientation. I was able to start to gain a broader understanding of the world around me. As a healthcare major, I was able to build more empathy that would help me in my future career. My professors talked about how different cultures could impact how a person performs daily activities. They helped us develop empathy for people moving through life with various disabilities. We were taught that all humans had a right to live their best life. Understanding that helped me to become a better clinician. It made me a better human being. That can only happen when all of the information is presented.

SB1 wants to limit course information and discussion that deal with anything controversial. It does not want the more difficult aspects of our history to be presented. It plans to set rules against healthy debate, yet states it wants to better Ohio schools. The way to better our universities and colleges, and thus, our country, is to learn about those difficult topics and engage in discussion so that we don't repeat the actions in the future. There are aspects to American history that are shameful. But rather than fear it, we should learn from it. The goal is for students to form their own opinion can only be achieved by presenting all of the information.

SB1 also wants to eliminate programs and policies that have to do with diversity, equity, and inclusion. Ohio colleges and universities currently attract people from all over the world, and from all walks of life. Having a diverse population helps students gain insight into other cultures, other life experiences, other ways of thinking. Protecting diversity, equity, and inclusion programs and policies ensures that all students have the support they need to obtain their best college experience. This results in students that are more

prepared to enter the workforce and society. We are a global society. We would be doing our students a disservice if we limit their experience.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my testimony today. I ask you to take my testimony to heart and vote NO on Senate Bill 1. Please protect our schools and especially our students.

Amy Kelly