

Testimony of Elizabeth Hoag, MA, RPA
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 Elizabeth Hoag, and I am a college professor with 20 years of classroom teaching experience at several Ohio public and private colleges and universities.

I stand in opposition to SB1 because it represents an unprecedented overreach into higher education, undermining academic freedom, faculty governance, and the ability of institutions to prepare students for a globalized world. SB1 seeks to micromanage course syllabi, monitor faculty for ideological conformity, and eliminate vital diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives that create more accessible and equitable learning environments. By dictating how and what we teach, this bill weakens Ohio's ability to attract top-tier educators and students. The success of Ohio's higher education system depends on intellectual freedom, not political mandates. I urge you to oppose this bill in the interest of our students, our institutions, and the future of Ohio's workforce.

As faculty who teaches anthropology elective courses, this legislation would make it nearly impossible for me and my colleagues to effectively teach our subject matter. Anthropology is the study of what makes us human. We do so with a holistic and multifaceted view of the historical and cultural foundations of behavior that allow us to illustrate why other people are the way they are both physically and culturally over time. I strive to create a classroom that is free of bias so students can explore these topics and ideas within the safety and confines of the institution. How can I teach about the vast and beautiful global human diversity when SB 1 makes what I teach a "controversial belief or policy" when covering topics like marriage, women, gender, colonialism, climate change, Indigenous people, history of racism, etc.?

My classes are not required, they are electives that students take because they want to learn more about these subjects. Through my teaching they learn things about themselves and others, learn to think critically about the world and to make their own conclusions about how this information fits into their academic and post-academic lives. This bill forces a distorted definition of intellectual diversity that could hinder evidence-based teaching and learning in Ohio.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful and overreaching bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.