

9 March 2025

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

My name is Amanda Ash, and I am a PhD student in The Department of Astronomy at the Ohio State University. I stand in opposition of Senate Bill 1 as it seeks to mold higher education into the image of the legislature's beliefs. SB 1 will deal unequivocal damage to Ohio higher education.

In testimony on February 12, 2025, on senate bill 1, there was an outpouring of opposition from educators, students and parents. Over 200 witnesses showed up in person to voice their admonishment of Senate Bill 1 with over 1000 opposing testimonies put into public record. There are only 15 proponent statements in the public record. Opposing witnesses to the bill spoke on how it would hinder their real-life classrooms and educations. Despite seeing this outcry against Senate Bill 1 from the actual people who it would impact, the Senate committee on higher education spent less than an hour to push Senate Bill 1 to vote. This is clear evidence that Senate Bill 1 was never about furthering education. It is about control.

Senate Bill 1 is a clear attempt by the Ohio legislative body to censor higher education and promote the beliefs of the legislative body. Academic institutions thrive on a range of ideas which Senate Bill 1 will destroy. "Controversial Ideas" as they have been defined cannot be separated from education. The faculty, graduate students, and student body which constitute these institutions come from different world views defined by experiences that you have deemed "controversial". Littered throughout the bill is clear indications of the biases and fears of the legislators. If this bill is enacted, *You*, the Ohio legislative body, will have elected to go a witch hunt. *You* will have decided that ideas and initiatives which promote voices that are not your own are dangerous and must be stamped out because it threatens *your* world view. This does nothing to support the development of students at these institutions. Rather, it stifles the students' ability to analyze arguments as Senate Bill 1 will only allow one side of the argument to be given. I ask the legislators to reflect on two questions: Why are you so afraid of these ideas? And if these ideas are so dangerous, do you trust your constituents so little as to not be able to determine this on their own accord?

I fear the impacts that Senate Bill 1 will have on student development and the future of higher education. I beg the house to heed the warnings of your constituents. I implore you to vote no on Senate Bill 1.

Thank you.

Amanda Ash