

Testimony of Margot Hare

Before the House Higher Education Committee

Representative Tom Young, Chair

March 11, 2025

Good morning. Thank you, Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and members of the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee for allowing me to testify today. My name is Margot Hare, and I am here to encourage you to vote NO on Senate Bill 1/House Bill 6.

I chose to come to the Ohio State University four and a half years ago from Kentucky. Last year, I earned my bachelor's degree, and I am currently a master's student in Slavic Studies at OSU. I chose to come to OSU because of its renowned linguistics faculty and Slavic department. I chose to come to OSU because I knew it would give me an excellent education and because I knew it would look really good on a resume. But I am worried that future students looking at OSU will not be able to say these things because of Senate Bill 1, and I'm worried about the economic impact this bill will have on the state of Ohio as a whole.

Students are choosing to avoid Ohio because of this bill. I have a close friend who is considering leaving partway through their PhD program at OSU because they understand what the disastrous consequences of this bill will be for them. I've spoken one-on-one to students that have been admitted to my program for next year, and they don't want to come here anymore. Instead of being able to eagerly encourage them to come to Ohio State and join me in our excellent program, we have to discuss the realities of how this bill could damage the quality of their

education. Will they be able to rigorously discuss important and relevant topics in our field with their fellow classmates? Will courses essential to their development as future professionals – courses that initially attracted them to OSU – be erased? Should they just avoid Ohio?

I know of individuals who were offered jobs at OSU and are instead choosing to pursue careers at universities outside of Ohio, in states that value their academic and personal freedoms, because of this bill. Why would, for example, a public health professor choose to work at OSU if they can't freely discuss the societal factors that influence health disparities, including race and sexual orientation? These talented people are taking their money with them. No more tuition payments from those students, and these academics will take their federal and private grant money with them.

OSU is the pride of Ohio, and I want it to stay that way. I was proud to graduate with my bachelor's degree from here last year. Will I have to reassure future employers that my OSU degree was earned before academic freedom was compromised? This bill will only serve to tarnish our reputation, pushing away grant-earning faculty and pushing away tuition-paying students.

I urge you to reject this reckless bill before it does irreversible damage to Ohio's economy, its universities, and its standing in our nation. I am happy to take any questions. Thank you for taking the time to listen to my testimony today.