

Testimony of Jordan Tate

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:

I am a full professor at the university of Cincinnati and have lived in Ohio for 30 years. As Both a faculty member, and a parent of two brilliant children in Cincinnati public schools I have grave concerns about SB1 and its impact not only on the quality of education in the state of Ohio, but also the vast economic and cultural impact passing this bill will bring. I do not represent the University of Cincinnati but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen.

As a parent I can not in good faith encourage or allow my children to attend university in a state with draconian restrictions on education and freedom of speech that will not only adversely impact their ability to understand the history of our great nation but also impinge on their constitutional rights for freedom of speech by restricting their access to historical fact, proven and tested knowledge in their fields, and academic freedom. As a result of these of these restrictions all Ohio students will be burdened with an incomplete education and distinct limitations on their ability to appropriately compete with students from states that still value academic freedom. Without access to the knowledge, challenges, and rigor of an educational system where faculty, students, and universities live in fear of their state governments Ohio students and Universities will fall far below our regional and national competition.

While you may believe that SB1 will protect students from “controversial” beliefs, beliefs that historically were deemed controversial are now the beliefs that have allowed science and the humanities to thrive. If we limit our students ability to explore and challenge the norms of the status quo we will never be able to be competitive as a state.

There are countless examples of advancements that were deemed controversial but now are the foundation of our worldview: Galileo was placed under House Arrest for the belief that the Earth rotates around the Sun, Ignaz Semmelweis was institutionalized for advocating for handwashing to prevent disease at hospitals, Alan Turing the father of computer science was chemically castrated and shortly after died of suicide for being gay.

If Ohio imposes these restrictions on our own children and educational institutions we are relegating ourselves to a future that lacks innovation, progress, scientific discovery,

and the rich culture that the arts and humanities provides. The very things that diverse perspectives bring, the advancements in our understanding of the natural world, bacteria, virus and microorganisms, and computers are born from the ability to exist in a space that prizes academic freedom, freedom of thought, and freedom of speech.

Most importantly, I fail to see any economic, social, or educational benefit to imposing the restrictions on SB1. The first impact of SB1 will be an exodus of expert faculty and researchers in the sciences, medicine, computer science, the humanities, and the arts. When leading scholars in the field start to leave universities, so too will the students who want to study with the brightest minds in their disciplines. Soon after we will be unable to recruit or retain educators and students at all levels as they move to states that still defend academic freedom, the first amendment, and a commitment to greatness.

I urge you to reject SB1 in its entirety to protect the future of Ohio. Passing HB6 would be toppling the first domino towards Ohio's decline and the legacy of discoveries that have happened here ranging from our discovery of flight, crucial medicines whose impacts have been felt around the globe, and the advancements that our corporations have been able to make by hiring college graduates from Ohio universities.

If SB1 passes, that future dies for every resident in the State of Ohio. A state that I am proud to call home and one that is currently an educational powerhouse. I was proud to represent the United States of America and the State of Ohio as a Fulbright Fellow. Notably, nearly half of the Fulbright Fellows I was with were either born or educated in the State of Ohio. We have world class universities across the state that not only propel our economies forward but also enrich the entire country. Please don't let this pride and hope die in the State of Ohio.

Sincerely,
Jordan Tate