

Testimony of Dennis P. Malberti
Before the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee
Rep. Tom Young, Chair
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Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and Members of the Higher Education Committee:

Ohio House Higher Education Committee
Dennis P. Malberti
7314 Forest Cove Lane
Northfield, Ohio 44067
dscmalberti2@gmail.com
216-773-1110

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My name is Dennis P. Malberti, and I am writing as a **concerned citizen** in **strong opposition** to Senate Bill 1 (SB 1). This bill is not about improving education; it is a **politically motivated** attack that threatens academic freedom, weakens workforce development, and prioritizes ideology over facts. If passed, SB 1 will have **devastating consequences** for Ohio's higher education system, workforce, and economy.

SB 1 is an Unfounded Attack on Higher Education

One of the most troubling aspects of SB 1 is its attempt to **eliminate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) from higher education. There is no evidence, no textbook, no clinical guideline, and no workforce development strategy that supports removing DEI.** DEI is not about division or political agendas—it ensures that students are **prepared for the real world**, where they will work with people of all backgrounds.

Employers across industries—healthcare, business, and technology—expect workers to be **culturally competent and adaptable.** Ignoring DEI in education weakens Ohio's ability to produce **competitive, well-prepared graduates**, which will ultimately **harm our economy and workforce.**

Additionally, SB 1 seeks to limit or outright ban instruction on “**controversial**” topics, including climate change, foreign policy, and electoral politics. **This vague and dangerous restriction** threatens the ability of educators to teach essential subjects **grounded in evidence, research, and fact.** What happens when a medical student refuses to acknowledge racial disparities in maternal mortality? Or when an economics student insists that the Great Depression never happened? **Ohio cannot afford to produce graduates who are unprepared for reality.**

The Faculty Strike Ban is Based on a False Premise

Supporters of SB 1 claim that banning faculty strikes is necessary to prevent disruptions in education. **This is misleading. The last faculty strike in Ohio occurred in 2019** at Wright State University—after **two years of failed contract negotiations**. These strikes are rare, and when they do happen, they are the **result of administrative failures, not faculty irresponsibility**. Using this as justification for stripping educators of their rights is **dishonest and unnecessary**.

SB 1 also **prohibits collective bargaining** over critical issues like **workload, evaluations, tenure, and retrenchment**. This means faculty will have no say in the policies that directly impact their ability to educate students. **This is not about preventing disruptions—it is about silencing educators**.

Overreach and Government Control in Higher Education

SB 1 **radically expands government overreach** in higher education. The bill:

- **Reduces trustee terms** from nine to six years, increasing political turnover and instability in governance.
- **Mandates “statements of commitment”** that institutions must include on official documents, limiting institutional autonomy.
- **Requires public syllabi postings, including instructor qualifications and course materials**, potentially exposing faculty to harassment and political attacks.
- **Bans institutional partnerships with China**, even in research collaborations that have nothing to do with politics.

These provisions do **nothing to improve education** but instead place institutions **under tighter political control, stifling innovation and independence**.

SB 1 Silences the Public and Weakens Ohio’s Future

The fact that **opposition testimony has been limited to just three hours** speaks volumes. If SB 1 truly benefits Ohio, why are legislators **afraid to hear from the people**? The public deserves to have its voice heard on a bill that will have lasting consequences on our students, universities, and workforce.

Conclusion: SB 1 is a Mistake for Ohio

If SB 1 becomes law, **Ohio will suffer**. Talented students and educators will leave the state, and our universities will struggle to compete on a national level. This bill does nothing to improve education, but it does a great deal to undermine it.

I urge you to **reject SB 1** and stand with the students, workers, and businesses that depend on a strong, independent education system. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dennis P. Malberti

dscmalberti2@gmail.com

216-773-1110

