

Testimony of Kelly Taylor Osborne

Before the House Higher Education Committee

Representative Tom Young, Chair

March 9, 2025

Representative Young and fellow members of the Higher Education Committee,

I first and foremost hope you are all doing well. I am a master's student at the University of Cincinnati studying urban planning with my educational background being around communication sciences and leadership. I come before you today to strongly protest against the implementation of Senate Bill 1, a proposition that masquerades the deterioration of education under a thinly veiled mask of modesty. Let me be very clear when I say that I thoroughly agree that the education system we operate in severely needs restructuring. We see how it dehumanizes children before they even have the chance to define who they are, catapulting generations of children into a culture of emotional numbness which we now see culminating in a severe mental health crisis. We see how university structures silo students into their departments, unable to find time to connect and collaborate across disciplines.

However, this bill carves out an existential level threat to the stability of academic integrity in the state of Ohio. A threat that would introduce an incredibly dangerous precedent into policymaking in the United States, something that we all must take accountability towards calling out as we see our country rapidly deteriorate as we hurdle towards a constitutional crisis. A threat that will deteriorate the quality of product that potential students can receive from Ohio, driving them away from attending school in our state, and further decreasing chances of long-term residency. Ohio's academic institutions have developed a strong national standard for their

quality, mark my words this will destroy the work of thousands of individuals and decimate the workforce and population prospects for our state for generations to come.

Growing up in Ohio I have seen the passion of millions of its residents. A passion which is fueled by the opportunities we have provided up until now. In the post de-industrialized age that the Rust Belt region currently operates in, we see a desire for progress away from the deteriorated communities we've grown up in. We cannot achieve this progress for ourselves without the assistance of strong higher education institutions with the freedom to operate under the accords which they see fit. The outlined restrictions in the SB1 will prevent higher education institutions from being able to provide the resources needed to take the state of Ohio into its next golden age. An age which requires difficult, dare I say, controversial conversations around topics including the long standing impacts of the Climate Crisis, international law, political sciences, and more. An age which requires enfranchised faculty who are passionate and have the resources to train the leaders we need. An age which does not just hand over the power of the 600,000 students currently pursuing higher education in the state of Ohio to the few which pay the most.

I would like to make it very clear that the attempt to de-educate my generation and younger generations is an effort that history has its eyes on. I for one refuse to quietly allow individuals who are hellbent on throwing my future into disarray through accelerationism and de-education campaigns to do as they please. While the majority of individuals in this committee may be willing to bend their knee for their own monetary gain at the cost of 600,000 students, I hope at least one of you are listening to the people this committee works for. I strongly encourage you to vote no on this bill. I strongly encourage you to think about if you'd want your kids or grandchildren to attend a university in a state which systemically undercuts the efforts that make the degree worth achieving.