

Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Piccolantonio, and members of the House Workforce & Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to share my testimony today. My name is Lora Cover and I am the President of the Shaker Heights City School District Board of Education. I am also the parent of two college students. I am strongly opposed to SB 1.

I am deeply concerned with the politicization of our educational institutions. In my capacity as a member of our local board of education, I worry about the prospects of our students leaving our schools and heading to higher education institutions no longer able to learn important facts and engage in the type of dialogue that will continue to expand their critical thinking skills.

One particular area of concern is the definition of what constitutes a "controversial belief or policy" including "issues such as climate policies, electoral politics, foreign policy, diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, immigration policy, marriage, or abortion." The requirement that institutions "affirm and declare that faculty and staff will allow students to reach their own conclusions about all controversial beliefs or policies" raises serious questions. Does this mean that a student could state inaccurate information on a test or project, and the professor could not count it against them? Would it make it nearly impossible to teach about historical events such as the Holocaust, because faculty could not correct students who don't believe it happened?

SB 1 will also have a significant chilling effect on intellectual freedom, a hallmark of our higher education institutions. Requiring course syllabi to be publicly accessible, including the personal information of faculty members, would likely lead to threats and harassment against educators from outside political entities, again putting our students' education at risk in favor of political tactics.

Finally, I fundamentally believe that the passage of this bill will have a devastating effect on our economy and the future of our state. Ohio would lose students, professors, tuition dollars, and countless jobs. We spent the weekend with family from across the country, and based on this bill, multiple family members shared their concerns about sending their children to Ohio for an education. It will be hard to argue with them if this bill passes.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this destructive bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share my testimony.

Respectfully submitted, Lora Cover President, Shaker Heights City School District Board of Education