

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Marilyn Orseno. I am an educator and life-long learner who has experienced each level of higher-education ranging from undergraduate to Ph.D. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

Reading through the bill, it seems that a significant amount of effort is being made to “fix” problems from the carousel of talking points from multi-billion dollar cable news networks, but in reality, do not exist. Where is the data supporting the changes this bill is making? So much decision-making in education is based on feelings and fear, not facts. Stripping the rights of educators in higher education who have dedicated their lives to their specialities and limiting the extent to which their students can learn from them is creating an America I do not recognize. What happened to the free exchange of ideas? What happened to respect for expertise and professionalism? Fears and feelings outweighing freedoms go against the founding ideals established in the late 18th century. I cannot help but think of James Madison’s 1792 essay on *Property* where Madison argues that “Conscience is the most sacred of all property; other property depending in part on positive law, the exercise of that, being a natural and unalienable right.” Madison also adds further definition of what a “just” government does not do in relation to the rights of the people and the use and development of their faculties (abilities), “That is not a just government, nor is property secure under it, where arbitrary restrictions, exemptions, and monopolies deny to part of its citizens that free use of their faculties, and free choice of their occupations, which not only constitute their property in the general sense of the word; but are the means of acquiring property strictly so called.” A just government does not limit freedom of thought and use of our abilities, especially when unfounded claims play a major role in decision-making.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this undoubtedly un-American bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.