

Gabe Guidarini - SB 1 Testimony, Wednesday, January 29, 2025

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Ohio Senate Higher Education Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide testimony for Senate Bill 1.

The politicization of higher education is a concern among college students not only here in Ohio, but across the nation at large. Ohio's students are paying increasingly large amounts of money to attend public universities and receive increasingly necessary credentials in order to find jobs in an environment more competitive than ever before. Ohio's students deserve a higher education system that adequately provides them the tools they need to succeed, and is not solely a projection of the academic department's political views.

As a twenty year old student at the University of Dayton, and the President of the University of Dayton College Republicans, I believe concerns about the politicization of academia are widely held among those in my age group. While the University of Dayton is a private institution not subject to the implementation of this bill, I believe as a matter of principle that students who pay the necessary tuition are entitled to a fair and adequate education without being subject to targeted political influence or indoctrination, allowing them to find their own views from their own analysis of the information. The more students across all of higher education who are granted this, the better.

This bill, SB 1, provides the legal clarification necessary to ensure that Ohio public colleges remain neutral and unbiased in what they teach, ensuring that students are taught how to think, not what to think. It also ensures that Ohio students are not subject to so-called "DEI" programs that judge them based on what they are instead of who they are. All Ohio students who pay into the system should be judged based on their merit and qualifications, ensuring that not only are they judged fairly as individuals, but also ensuring that the state of Ohio is educating the best and training the best for the economy of tomorrow.

Finally, of relevance to my generation, this bill ensures oversight to protect our national security from potentially hostile actors. Students who attend academic institutions in Ohio do so with the assumption that those institutions operate for the benefit of Ohio and the United States, and not for the benefit of our nation's adversaries like the Chinese government. Oversight on this is crucial for protecting the interests of our nation on campuses, and as a result, the students on those campuses as well.

Thank you again for allowing me to provide testimony on Senate Bill 1. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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