

Testimony of Abigail Foltz Hottle, MA CCC-SLP  
Before the Senate Higher Education Committee  
Senator Kristina Roegner, Chair  
February 10, 2025

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingram, and Members of the Higher Education Committee:

My name is Abby Foltz Hottle and I am an assistant professor at the University of Cincinnati in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. I teach and directly supervise graduate students training to become speech language pathologists. I do not represent the University of Cincinnati, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen.

I urge this committee to vote against SB 1. I am deeply concerned regarding the instant and long-lasting ramifications that this legislative body is considering railing against institutions of higher education. Specifically, the incredible overreach demanding specific texts be instituted, posting and sharing syllabi, reducing tenure opportunities, and eliminating the protection of our right to protest and engage in collective bargaining.

When we open the door wide open for every person to pick and critique, we cannot do our job to the best of our ability. The process to be hired and trained in higher education institutions is rigorous and thorough. We undergo strict accreditation standards from our certification body (in our case, the American Speech Language Hearing Association) to make sure that we continue providing evidenced based, compassionate care to our clients, students, and patients. Eliminating protections against tenure eliminate the progress in the United States for top-tier research; directly impacting the lives of not only tenure track faculty (of which I am not), but also their research assistants, support staff, students, and most importantly, the lives which they may positively impact with their important work. Lack of tenure means a lack of funding, which reduces opportunities for all Ohioans.

I am disgusted that this governing body would seek to eliminate our right to protest. We, like all Ohioans and Americans, have the right to protest and are protected of this right in the first amendment of the United States constitution. Though our work environments may be different, we deserve all the protections we are afforded under the law.

And finally, the discussion to eliminate progress made in the realm of diversity, equity, and inclusion is abhorrent. To have twisted our goals of opening pathways for underrepresented students, who also prove their merit, to attempt to delegitimize the challenges that underrepresented groups, including women, different races, genders, and abilities due to the systemic barriers that this legislation refuses to acknowledge is sad. I encourage all in support of this bill to consider why DEI makes them feel uncomfortable and continue to ask themselves why they would stand in the way of progress for the Ohioans whom they serve. Eliminating inclusion and belonging initiatives and reinstating more barriers creates more

harm, and reduces opportunities for Ohio to recruit scholars, researchers, and untapped talent that could positively shape Ohio for the future. Our world is evolving and keeping Ohio in the past is harmful and shameful. I urge all legislators to not pass this bill.

Thank you,

Abby Foltz Hottle, MA CCC-SLP

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