

February 10, 2025

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to provide written testimony regarding SB1. My name is Terrie Puckett. I am a state university graduate (University of Cincinnati), a homeowner, a resident of Loveland Ohio for 20.5 years, and an active member through work of the Little Miami River Chamber Alliance.

I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

My opposition rests on three key points:

1. Continued “brain drain” decimating Ohio’s workforce
The state universities and schools of Ohio are currently academically rigorous and competitive as options for many high school seniors as they prep applications. When I attended The Ohio State University for one year, the only qualifications to be admitted were 1) an Ohio address and 2) a pulse. University of Cincinnati, I imagine, was the same. State schools were seen as “safety” schools—where you end up when GOOD schools were not an option.

Now both reject more students than apply, they have waitlists. Why? Because these schools are academically rigorous and they and—by extension—their graduates are respected as such. SB 1 would place this in jeopardy by taking away the schools’ ability to challenge students to do better academically, to rise to the top in their fields, and to create in them a work ethic which will carry-over into their careers. Students will choose to go elsewhere, to a school that will prepare them for excellence in their career—and the opportunity for the best job potential. They will not come back. Which leads to...

2. The loss of major employers across the state
These universities and colleges are not training schools for trades—which are ALSO needed and should be strong, but that is a different topic. The point of attending university is NOT to be trained in a job, but to be trained to think and learn. As my father always told me, what the degree is in is not important. Employers want to know you can problem solve and learn, to bring added value to the team, or why would they waste time (which is money) bringing you on board? By the way, my father held a double BS in Biology from East Tennessee State University (another state school) and his entire career was in building services at institutions. He was also the first college graduate in his coal mining family.

As the pool of students evaporates from the state schools, so will those employers who moved to Ohio in part because of the talent pool. Why would a place like

P&G—reliant on engineers, scientists, business leaders, and creatives—stay in a state that actively keeps them away from students experiencing academic rigor? That turn into a training camp that only does one thing? Where the graduates will not be able to compete—or even survive—when they are transferred to other locations? They won't and the big businesses know that...and they will leave. Which then leads to...

3. Loss of revenue to the state and local governments in the form of taxes. Employers leaving will take away the income tax their employees earned, and any corporate tax paid. Also, loss of employment opportunities leading to graduates leaving, taking their income tax (and potential property tax as homeowners) with them. This would leave the state with a large population on fixed incomes either as retirees or because they are underemployed. Will the federal government make up the difference in the loss? I do not think so, and you don't either. So where will the money to repair roads come from, for example?

In short, SB 1 is disastrous for Ohio both now and into the future, and I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.



Terrie Puckett, resident, homeowner, chamber member