

Testimony of Katharine V. Jackson, J.D., Ph.D.
Before the Senate Higher Education Committee
Senator Kristina Roegner, Chair
February 11, 2025

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

I am an associate professor of law at the University of Cincinnati College of Law (“UC”), where I have taught business and estate law for the past year and a half. I submit this testimony on my own behalf as a private citizen to oppose Senate Bill 1 (“SB 1”), and what follows does not represent the views of the University of Cincinnati or the College of Law.

As a relative newcomer to UC, I am awed by its commitment to serving the community. UC students not only come from its surrounding neighborhoods. They also reflect its very best values: public service, empathy, commitment, honesty, effectiveness, and fairness. It is a public institution, meant to train advocates who will go on to represent the very same communities that nurtured them. They are future criminal lawyers, business lawyers, immigration lawyers, transactional lawyers, and family lawyers. They defend victims of domestic violence. They help Cincinnati start-ups. And their clients are our neighbors.

SB 1 flies in the face of this foundational commitment. It tells our students: “you are not welcome here -- at this institution that is meant to serve you and help you serve others.” It tells our students: “you are better off elsewhere, going to school in Pennsylvania or Illinois or Virginia, to serve those communities who might appreciate your talents and your commitment.” Students with a keen mind for business Penn State or Pitt or Richmond.

The bill is much more than a brain drain, though. Cincinnati is named for the great Roman, Cincinnatus – a patriot who defended a polity committed to political equality and inclusion of each and every citizen. This bill makes a mockery of this town’s bedrock values. And I have witnessed firsthand talented, hardworking students struggling with the feelings of erasure, discrimination and hate engendered by this bill.

I can also tell you that, should the anti-labor provisions go into effect, UC will have a hard time attracting the talent it needs to continue on its impressive trajectory of growth.

Do not pass it.