

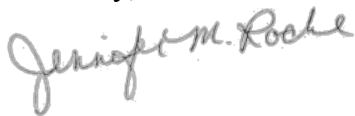
Jennifer Roche, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor  
Speech Pathology & Audiology  
Kent State University  
February 6, 2025

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

My name is Jenny Roche, and I am a taxpayer in Summit County and an Associate Professor of Speech-Language Pathology and Educational Psychology, specializing in cognitive psychology at Kent State University. I strongly oppose SB 1/HB 6 due to its harmful impact on Ohio's students, its long-term consequences for the current and future workforce, and the damage it will inflict on Ohio's economy. I'd like to share an example of how this bill will directly affect Ohioans and the future of our state.

Imagine a passionate speech-language pathology student eager to attend one of Ohio's top universities. She dreams of helping people regain their voices—whether stroke survivors relearning language or children struggling to communicate their basic needs. She wants to stay close to home and chooses a program known for its strong faculty, evidence-based curriculum, and hands-on clinical training. However, under SB 1/HB 6, restrictions on classroom discussions and faculty oversight begin to erode the quality of her education. Critical topics like health disparities and neurodiversity—the foundation of speech-language pathology—are avoided by professors wary of political scrutiny. As a result, she enters the field unprepared, lacking the critical training needed to provide sensitive, patient-centered care. Would you want this for your child, your aging parents, or even yourself? If this bill passes, consider the long-term impact on your healthcare. Stroke survivors often struggle with language loss, one of the most common challenges in daily life after a stroke. Would you want to be treated by a clinician who lacks the skills to help you regain your voice and provide care tailored to your specific needs? Preventing faculty from teaching about critical health topics would produce such a scenario. Not only will this impact healthcare, but this bill will also have long-range impacts on Ohio's workforce and economy. Faculty are already leaving in a mass exodus, seeking institutions that value academic freedom and critical thinking. With fewer experienced professors and limited clinical placements, students like her face declining opportunities. Frustrated, she considers transferring out of state—taking her tuition, talent, and future career contributions with her. When students leave, they may not return, as licensure is often obtained in the state where they complete their education. This will significantly worsen Ohio's healthcare shortage and weaken the state's future. I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this SB 1/HB 6 bill. Thank your time and consideration and again for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer M. Roche". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Jennifer Roche, Ph.D.