

## TESTIMONY AGAINST OHIO SENATE BILL 1

*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 testify today. My name is Tiffany Stone Wolbrecht. I am a STEM educator and researcher with over a decade of experience advancing education and public engagement in the sciences. I currently serve as a government contractor for agencies like the National Science Foundation and oversee programs that connect all communities with STEM opportunities, ensuring that education remains open to all and rooted in evidence-based practices.

I strongly opposed the SB 1 and its companion bill, HB 6, because they threaten the integrity of Ohio's higher education system by imposing unnecessary restrictions on academic freedom and represents a government overreach to control our higher education institutions. Rather than strengthening our universities, this bill imposes excessive regulations, bureaucratic mandates, and top-down oversight that interfere with the ability of institutions to govern themselves.

This bill's approach to syllabi requirements, faculty evaluations, and restrictions on certain topics in the classroom risks undermining the very foundation of intellectual freedom. True academic success is only possible when universities can set rigorous standards without government micromanagement. By dictating how institutions must handle controversial issues, SB 1 hinders the free exchange of ideas.

Moreover, the bill's ban on DEI initiatives restricts universities from securing and training the talented citizens we must prepare in order to compete in the global marketplace where diversity of thought and background contribute to innovation and economic success. We should encourage policies that promote merit, excellence, and competition, not heavy-handed state mandates that limit how institutions attract top-tier talent.

Ohio's universities should be centers of free thought, open debate, and high academic standards—without unnecessary government overreach dictating how they operate. I urge you to vote NO on this misguided bill and instead work toward solutions that uphold institutional autonomy, protect free speech, and ensure that our universities remain globally competitive.

Thank you for your time and consideration,



Tiffany Stone Wolbrecht  
*scientist, educator, mother, concerned Ohio citizen*