

Testimony of Sally Kuzemchak, MS, RD

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 Sally Kuzemchak, and I am a graduate of The Ohio State University, where I received my Master's Degree in Dietetics in 2006. I have also served as an adjunct faculty member at Otterbein University and Ohio University Lancaster and Chillicothe, where I taught nutrition.

I do not represent any of these institutions, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 1.

I am writing to strongly object to SB1 that is currently being pushed through the Ohio Senate. As a graduate of an Ohio institution, as well as a mother of one current Ohio State student and one prospective Ohio State student, I am horrified at what this bill will do to Ohio's institutions of higher learning.

One of my children is thriving in the College of Environment and Natural Resources at Ohio State, where he studies wildlife, water quality, and, yes, climate change. He's an idealist, not concerned about making a fortune but rather concerned with protecting the planet. His plans include graduate work, possibly in Ohio.

My other son, currently a junior in high school here in Columbus, is hoping to study history, a subject he's been fascinated with since he was a preschooler.

The contents of SB1 make me wonder whether our older son will be able to finish his degree and learn what he needs to learn with the restrictions that will be placed on his teachers and department. I'm also sure that if SB1 passes, he will look out of state for his graduate work.

It makes me wonder whether our younger son will need to look outside of Ohio as well for his college education. How can he possibly learn history and expand his critical thinking with these restrictions to academic freedom?

Frankly, passing this bill would be an embarrassment to our state. This will negatively impact the number and quality of applicants to Ohio colleges and universities and erode the quality of professors and researchers wanting to make Ohio their home and workplace.

My husband and I are originally from Pennsylvania, where I attended Penn State University. We moved here in 2000 and fell in love with the vibrancy and quality of life in Columbus.

But it's legislation like this that makes me wonder if we are in the wrong place--and whether our family would be better suited in a place that values intellectual curiosity, diversity of thoughts, and critical thinking.

I urge Ohio legislatures to stand against this unpopular bill. Ohioans DO NOT support this politically motivated plan.

Let's move Ohio forward – not backward.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally Kuzemchak, MS, RD

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