

## **Opponent testimony for Ohio Senate Bill 1**

### **Higher Education Committee**

**02-10-2025**

**Roya Franseth**

Chair Kristina Roegner, Vice Chair Jerry Cirino, Ranking Member Catherine Ingram, and members of the Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for reading my testimony. My name is Roya Franseth, they/them. I am a graduate student and aim to pursue further education in hopes of becoming a professor with the goal of continuing to research topics that may benefit our society. I care deeply about the future of our academic institutions, and am speaking on behalf of only myself. I write to oppose Senate Bill 1.

My work is in the geosciences, where we explore the Earth's multifaceted, complex, and dynamic systems. Although policy is not our focus in class, geoscience lays the foundation for much of the policy that impacts us today. For example, understanding Earth's climate (what it is, how it works, and how it has changed through time) is a very important aspect of paleontology – and a very important aspect of understanding climate policy today. Climate policy is listed under the “Controversial belief or policy” section of SB1 as one of the examples. My concern with this bill is that rather than allowing students to use the facts they learn in class to form opinions about various ways those class topics manifest in their day-to-day life, the bill will foster an environment wherein people dispute facts based on their belief in a certain policy (or the underpinnings of a certain policy). If someone enters a classroom believing that climate isn't influenced by human activity, is presented with evidence that human activity *does* influence our climate, and chooses to change their view on climate change as a result – is that an example of someone being presented with new information and allowing themselves to update their opinions, or is it indoctrination? I believe this bill leaves sufficient room for those who wish to further their own political agenda to claim indoctrination where students are simply being presented with facts that may challenge previously held worldviews.

I write because I care about the integrity of our schools, and the information presented therein. People are welcome to come to their own conclusions, but it is crucial that we all share the same basis of fact so that we can productively debate the best course of action. Our schools are how we establish that basis. This bill would erode that integrity by providing avenues for people to influence what information gets presented in classrooms not on the basis of fact or academic rigor, but on the basis of prior knowledge and beliefs about the world – knowledge and beliefs that may be outdated or incorrect. I ask that you please consider my testimony and vote no on Senate Bill 1.

Thank you for your time.