

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 Scott Ley. I am a retired military officer and retired federal civilian employee. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

The proposed bill undermines the idea that a board of trustees will not be continuously refreshed. The board members would not be required to take a 4-year break after nine years (or six years as proposed in SB1) on a board. It will become a never-ending cycle of the same people representing the concerns of Ohioans. In the military, refreshing the force, and developing new ideas are critical to its success, health and designation as the best military in the world.

The proposed bill attempts to control the curriculum, dialog, and makeup of the faculty and student body. The faculty are being paid to challenge their students. The students will be the future leaders of our society. To create a workforce of the future, it is critical that our institutions of higher education do not limit their courses, dialog and makeup of the faculty and student body due what the state legislature views as controversial beliefs or policies. The bill considers "any belief or policy that is the subject of political controversy, including issues such as climate policies, electoral politics, foreign policy, diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, immigration policy, marriage, or abortion" to be controversial.

Where are we going to have the essential debates by our future leaders and workforce of critical ideas? Ideas centered around the vitality of our nation and the world, the sustainment of our democracy and society, the maintenance of our leadership role in the world. Where do future leaders debate the vital sustainment of America's melting pot? A melting pot made up of all different races, gender, religious and social economic backgrounds. This free exchange of ideas and debate must take place in our state institutions of higher learning. Our institutions of higher education must ensure a balanced and robust diversity of professors who meet the institutions' rigorous academic requirements. They must have the freedom to create curriculum, share opinions, illicit critical thinking from their students, and discuss real world events. Our institutions of higher education must also ensure a balanced and robust diversity of students who meet the institutions' rigorous academic requirements.

My intense introduction into critical thinking skills began with my education at The United State Air Force Academy. It continued with my career in the military and my more than 40+ years of service to our nation. Throughout my career, I served with a wide range of military and civilian professionals. People from different countries, religions, race, gender and social economic background. The military has always prided itself for embracing the diversity amongst its personnel, equity in the treatment of each individual, and the exchange of competing ideas as an asset. This diversity has proven to deliver the best solution for any given situation through exploring differences, and learning from them, not by avoiding them. The exchange of ideas between faculty members and students does not mean that there is an endorsement of those ideas by the institutions of higher learning. We must treat our faculty and students as adults able to utilize critical thinking skills to come to conclusions and make decisions without rules and limitations from a politically focused legislature.

The current Sec. 4117.14 of the Revised Ohio Code correctly identifies public employees that can not strike because of their impact on the life and safety of our communities. The SB1 proposal to add Full-time faculty members of any state institution of higher education to the list makes no sense. The proposal undercuts a key tenant of collective bargaining which Ohioans believe is key to a successful

economy and healthy employer and employee relationship. Would any State Senator or State Representative work for a company that failed to agree to negotiate with its workforce on working conditions, salary, etc? The proposed revision will likely negatively impact the quality of our educators and in-turn impact the quality of Ohio's institutions of higher learning and the draw they have on exceptional students. A lose-lose for Ohio!!

Furthermore, the SB 1 proposal to create an American Civic Literacy course at the college level is too late to be effective and a waste of valuable time and financial resources of students that are already paying for an expensive college education. These ideas must be introduced in elementary school, expanded on in middle school, and studied and debated in high school. All school age children of Ohio should be taught civics as a part of their early education.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this highly restrictive and politically motivated bill, which will undermine the great institutions of higher learning in Ohio. The faculty and students must be able to express and exchange their diverse viewpoints without interference from the state legislature. Knowledge is the most powerful tool that leaders possess when making critical decisions. Give our future students that opportunity to acquire a wide range of knowledge and diverse experiences.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Scott Ley