

February 11, 2025

Members of the Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my written testimony today. I write as a citizen, a taxpayer, and the parent of a high school junior who is looking at his college options. Due to this, I have an acquaintance with the higher education landscape within which Ohio Senate Bill 1 is being considered. I am testifying in OPPOSITION to the bill. What concerns me are some of its negative consequences for the economic competitiveness of Ohio. Consider the following actual or potential implications of Ohio SB 1 if it passes as currently written:

1. Reduces competitiveness: Ohio public institutions will be placed at a competitive disadvantage relative to their in-state peers and public institutions in neighboring states who will have greater curricular and institutional freedom.
2. Recruitment of students: due to the demographic cliff, it is imperative that Ohio institutions of higher learning be able to recruit from all over the country. This bill will reduce the applicant pool by scaring people away from out of state.
3. Brain drain: do we wish to attract and retain the best and brightest? This bill will cause many to think twice about coming to Ohio to live, learn, or teach. Some will leave, wishing to live and raise their families in a less restrictive environment.
4. Bureaucracy and efficiency: these matters are best handled in-house at the institutions themselves. The governor appoints trustees. They know best what community needs are. Ohio SB 1 usurps local control. There is no benefit to this.
5. Economic effects. Many businesses, entrepreneurs and transplants from other states like Florida we would seek to attract will see these measures as overly restrictive and will choose other states to locate in. This bill will hamper Ohio's economic growth.
6. Cost of compliance: there is a regulatory burden here that will not be borne by peer institutions or public institutions in neighboring states. Public universities are already working within budgetary and demographic constraints. They need less red tape, not more.
7. Educational decision-making. There is a section of the bill that requires shuttering programs that graduate fewer than five students per year over a three-year period. This is too broad. Individual institutions should be empowered to make these decisions. Some programs are small by design. Others are crucial but rigorous and difficult so don't graduate many students. These curricular decisions should be left to the colleges and universities.
8. Curricular content. Instead of banning classes from the curriculum, why not require universities to emphasize critical thinking to empower students to evaluate what they are being taught using logic, reason, and common sense?

Finally, people can disagree about the value of organized labor, but fundamental to having a labor union is the right to strike. I learned this during my time loading trucks at UPS. We never did strike, but knowing that we could strike gave us leverage at the bargaining table. Same goes for faculty and other public employee unions.

Respectfully submitted,



John Huss
2443 Edgehill Road
Cleveland Heights, OH 44106
(216) 970-0837
huss.john@gmail.com