

My name is Ornaith O'Dowd and I am an associate professor of philosophy at the University of Cincinnati Blue Ash, a regional campus of UC with a proud tradition of offering a quality college education to students from all walks of life. I offer this testimony in the hope that you will vote against SB1. I am writing in a personal capacity.

Every day, I am impressed by the dedication and integrity of my UCBA colleagues, who work very hard to equip our students with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive as citizens and workers. The unfair caricature of professors indoctrinating students or closing down debate simply does not reflect the reality in our classrooms and on our campus. On the contrary, my colleagues and I teach our students how to think for themselves and how to engage in debate and discussion in an informed, open-minded, thoughtful, and respectful manner. Intellectual diversity thrives in our classrooms.

It perplexes me, then, to see a bill like SB1 purport to promote intellectual diversity while proposing heavy-handed measures that will have a chilling effect on free inquiry and discussion in our classes. The government should not be micromanaging our reading lists or curricula; it's a dangerous precedent as well as a costly administrative burden to implement.

Diversity among our students, faculty, and staff is a tremendous asset to our campuses; after all, there's nothing more intellectually enlivening than having lots of different sorts of people with varied perspectives and experiences coming together to think and learn. Equity helps ensure that everyone has a fair shot at a great education; sadly, this hasn't always been the case. Inclusion is about creating a welcoming and supportive campus where all students can safely learn and grow and feel part of our community. This is a set of values we should be promoting, not just because it's the fair and decent thing to do, but because it helps prepare students for the diverse and complex society in which they are going to live and work.

The measures restricting due process, academic freedom, and collective bargaining rights for professors will do nothing to enhance education, but will drive talented scholars, teachers, and students away, damaging the reputation of our universities and the state as a whole.

Ohio's proud legacy in higher education deserves to be preserved and furthered; this bill would seriously undermine it. I strongly urge you to oppose SB 1.