

Testimony of Louis Wm. Kutcher, PhD
Before the Senate Higher Education Committee
Senator Kristina Roegner, Chair
February 11, 2025

My name is Louis Kutcher, PhD and I am writing today with significant concerns about Senate Bill 1 (SB1). I am a Professor of Biology at the University of Cincinnati (UC), where I've taught Ohio students for almost 20 years. Today I am testifying as a private citizen with two decades in higher education, and not as a representative of UC.

As written, Senate Bill 1 will be very destructive to higher education in Ohio. One of its main goals is to take educational decisions away from the professors who actually teach college courses. In particular, sections of the bill would put restrictions on how and when "controversial topics" could be addressed. It is always my hope, as an educator, that students would learn to evaluate issues – especially controversial issues – from multiple perspectives; to weigh evidence; and to reach their own informed conclusions (also a goal of SB1). The subject of biology is full of uncomfortable topics, but shying away from them doesn't help students learn to form opinions about them. Explaining a difficult or unpopular opinion in the classroom is not the same as indoctrination.

Biology is about life and death (and everything in between). To appreciate the richness and beauty of life requires exploration of all facets of life. Very little in biology is neat or tidy – it contains contradictions and grey areas that must be explored in order to understand how miraculous it is. Senate Bill 1 will make the job of exploring life MUCH more challenging if we must be concerned that a student will misunderstand the study of biology's contradictions and gray areas as indoctrination. Decisions about what and how to teach should be entrusted to educators, who really do care about the future of our students, and thus the future of Ohio.

For these reasons, I encourage you to vote NO on SB1.

Thank you,

Louis Wm Kutcher, PhD
Professor of Biology
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