

February 10, 2025

Dear 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 Brenda Wahl, and I am a dedicated teacher with 17 years of experience in fostering young minds. I take immense pride in Ohio's rich tradition of nurturing education, which has long attracted students from across the nation and around the globe to our renowned universities. However, I am here to voice my strong opposition to SB 1 and HB 6.

As an educator, I've witnessed firsthand the transformative impact that quality education has on our students. Our institutions not only equip them with academic knowledge but also cultivate critical thinking, innovation, and the vital skills necessary for their success in a diverse and rapidly evolving world. This bill, regrettably, threatens to dismantle that very foundation.

Beyond my professional observations, my entire family, parents, children, siblings, nieces and nephews have attended or are attending Ohio universities. Each one has been successful and has thrived under the guidance of our dedicated faculty and diverse academic programs. They not only graduated with honors but went on to make significant contributions in many fields. This bill will send our young people out of the state for education and then for jobs. Why do we want to drive them away?

From a wider perspective, studies have shown that diverse educational environments, which emphasize learning over ideological constraints, produce more innovative and adaptable graduates. By restricting academic freedom and creativity, these bills could lead to a decline in our universities' ability to attract top-tier talent, thus damaging Ohio's reputation as a leader in education.

I implore you to consider the profound implications that SB 1 and HB 6 hold for our state's future. These bills do not merely represent a change in policy; they place our educational standards and global competitiveness at risk. Our students deserve the best that Ohio has to offer, without the limitations these measures propose.

Please consider my testimony and vote NO on this destructive bill. Let's preserve the integrity and excellence of Ohio's higher education system for generations to come.

Thank you for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Brenda Wahl
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