

Written Testimony Opposing SB 1

Feb. 10, 2025

As someone who believes in the value of higher education and the labor rights of faculty, I strongly oppose SB 1, the so-called “Advance Ohio Higher Education Act,” a slightly revised version of last session’s SB 83.

Like its predecessor, this bill represents egregious government overreach and political interference in the university system. It seeks to dictate what can and cannot be taught in the classroom, stifling academic freedom under the guise of combating so-called “indoctrination”—a claim that is not supported by any real evidence. While its sponsors claim the bill promotes diversity of opinion, it does nothing of the sort.

SB 1 revives the push to strip away collective bargaining rights from faculty unions, reinstating a ban on faculty strikes and prohibiting unions from negotiating over faculty evaluations, tenure, and retrenchment (the process for reducing faculty positions). This means faculty would have little recourse against arbitrary dismissals, effectively gutting job security and making tenure meaningless. By defining retrenchment so broadly, the bill opens the door for mass layoffs without due process, creating an environment where faculty are constantly at risk of losing their jobs based on shifting political winds rather than academic merit.

Stripping faculty of their labor rights does not strengthen Ohio’s universities—it undermines them. The impact of this bill will be a weaker higher education system, diminished research capacity, and an inability to attract or retain top students and scholars. If the goal is truly to improve higher education, policymakers should focus on supporting faculty and students—not micromanaging universities and silencing educators.

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