

**Opponent Testimony for SB1
Education Committee
Tuesday, February 11, 2025**

**Amy Townsend-Small, Professor
University of Cincinnati**

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Dr. Amy Townsend-Small and I am a professor at the University of Cincinnati where I teach Environmental Studies to our undergraduate students. I'm also a dues paying member of the Ohio Conference of the American Association of University Professors. I submit this testimony in my individual capacity to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 1.

I'm concerned that Senate Bill 1 will restrict my and my colleagues ability to teach Ohio students about climate, the environment, and other "controversial beliefs or policies". I disagree that these are controversial since these issues are grounded in scientific facts. But aside from this point, any restriction on the teaching or discussion of these issues may have disastrous impact on our state. Take for example an environmental resource that, in my experience living and working in Ohio, transcends the political divide: Lake Erie. Increasing intensity and duration of harmful algae blooms in the lake negatively impact our state's economy. They can even restrict our access to clean drinking water, as we saw in Toledo in 2017. Research from many different scientists clearly shows that climate change will further worsen these events because rainstorms are stronger in a warming climate, and stronger rain washes the nutrients that feed algae blooms from farm fields into the lake.

This is not a "controversial belief". This is happening in our state and it is negatively affecting our farmers and fishermen. It is something that we need to prepare our students to deal with when you and I are too old to figure it out anymore, by arming them with the best tools in their tool kit. For these kinds of complicated environmental problems we are facing, students need a combination of science, policy, ethics, communication skills, and economics training. They are not afraid to ask tough questions and I hope I will never be afraid to encourage them to.

I'm proud of the work my colleagues and I are doing to train the next generation to work on this and many other challenges in the environment. Senate Bill 1 will take away my ability to continue to serve our students, and to teach them to be better thinkers and problem solvers. I strongly oppose Senate Bill 1. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Amy Townsend-Small