

Dr. Adam R. McKee
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Subject: Strong Opposition to Senate Bill 1

Dear Committee,

I am writing as a concerned citizen and faculty member at a community college in Ohio with strong opposition to Senate Bill 1. As currently constructed, this bill would be a severely misguided step in the evolution of higher education in the state of Ohio. I urge anyone who is invested in the betterment of our state and the continued excellence of Ohio's higher education institutions to vote against this bill which would undoubtedly harm students, faculty, and the community.

As a product of the Ohio public university system for both my undergraduate and master's degrees, I can attest that our campus communities are not being threatened by the strawman of "DEI" that this bill sets forth. My own experiences on multiple college campuses in the state is that our diversity, equity, and inclusion practices have strengthened free expression for students and not marginalized them. Campuses provide vital support for Ohioans pursuing higher education and these tools provide resources and opportunities for faculty members to better serve often diverse (both culturally and socio-economically) student populations. My current institution supports an incredibly diverse student body, and our initiatives work to ensure that **all** of these students are successful. At no point do students entering my classroom encounter expectations that they all are required to think as some monolithic adherents to an ideology. Our classes work to provide a wide breadth of readings that represent authors and schools of thought from a variety of cultures, time periods, philosophical backgrounds, and religions. The unintended consequences of this bill would serve to narrow that ideological complexity, not expand it. My experiences teaching at both urban community colleges and a rural HBCU in the South have significantly shaped my understanding of the value attached to students encountering diverse viewpoints while also being able to feel that they are accurately represented in the curriculum and at the institution.

I strongly believe that the bill also would significantly damage the reputation of the Ohio university system by limiting collective bargaining rights of faculty. I have worked in three different states other than Ohio as an academic and looked forward to returning to the state as my career moved past 15 years of classroom experience throughout the country. Part of what has made higher education in Ohio an attractive workplace is because we have continued to maintain our strong worker's rights. My father was a proud member of the firefighter's union for more than 30 years in this state and collective bargaining and worker's rights have raised the standard of living for myself and countless other Ohioans. Eviscerating that system will have the unintended consequence of making Ohio a less attractive place to work in higher education and will significantly impact the state's ability to attract and keep top-tier talent.

In short, the state of Ohio would be negatively impacted by the consequences of this bill. Students like the wonderful, intelligent, diverse, and hardworking students I have had the privilege of teaching every semester would receive a diluted version of the Ohio university system that empowered me to be a better teacher, better scholar, and better citizen. Ohio's higher education system thrives when faculty have a voice in shaping policies that impact our students' success. I urge you to vote against

SB1 and instead support policies that respect faculty expertise, uphold academic freedom, and protect collective bargaining rights.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this further and hope you will stand with faculty and students by opposing this harmful legislation.

Sincerely,

Adam R. McKee, PhD