

This is written testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 1 (SB 1). I have one BA and two MA degrees, I am a former educator (K-12, college) ending my teaching career as an adjunct at the University of Akron, and I have two children, the oldest of which will be ready for college in four years.

I stand in opposition to SB 1 because it is an unprecedented overreach into higher education, it undermines academic freedom and faculty governance, and actively opposes the ability of institutions to prepare students for a globalized world. SB 1 is a bad-faith attempt to pass the same harmful policies that Ohioans overwhelmingly opposed in Senate Bill 83. People like me used our Constitutional rights to speak out against SB 83 because it was plain that the goal was to destroy the value of education and academic freedom – politicians should never dictate what we can and cannot learn. We fought to keep Ohio's universities competitive and open to all perspectives, not just the ones which dogmatic politicians approve.

The failure of SB 83 should have been the final word on this issue but because the Ohio legislature is filled with bad-faith hypocritical politicians, we now have SB 1. Our universities do not need this bill. The people of Ohio already rejected this bill. I ask you to respect that decision and vote against SB 1.

This bill places arbitrary restrictions on faculty hiring, removes final say on hiring from the experts, limits tenure protections, and forces a distorted definition of intellectual diversity that hinders evidence-based teaching. It seeks to micromanage course syllabi, dictate how and what is taught in the classroom, monitor faculty for ideological conformity, and eliminate vital DEI initiatives that create more accessible and equitable learning environments. SB 1 proposes to remove the collective bargaining rights for faculty members that will destabilize our universities and make it harder to attract and retain quality educators. Most troublingly, it threatens institutional funding based on vague ideological metrics. The success of Ohio's higher education system depends on intellectual freedom, not political mandates. I urge you to oppose this bill in the interest of our students, our institutions, and the future of Ohio's workforce.

Senate Bill 1 sends a chilling message to students: Ohio is not a place for forward-thinking, inclusive, and high-quality education. If we want Ohio to remain competitive and retain educated people who will contribute to the economic and emotional well-being of fellow citizens, then we must invest in our students, not drive them away. Other states will be happy to welcome the talent we push out and very few, if any, will return to Ohio. This bill is a short-sighted political maneuver that will have devastating long-term consequences for our workforce, our economy, our communities, and make it unnecessarily harder for Ohio to compete nationally and globally. I strongly urge you to oppose Senate Bill 1 to protect Ohio's educational and economic future.

As a parent, I want my children to receive the best education possible, one that prepares them to think critically, engage in meaningful discourse, and navigate an increasingly diverse world – SB 1 is in direct opposition to my children's education. This bill seeks to inject political oversight into university curriculums, stripping institutions of their ability to provide a robust and independent education. I want Ohio to be a place where my children can receive a top-tier education and find meaningful careers, but this bill jeopardizes that possibility.

I love Ohio, but I refuse to build my future in a state that is actively working against higher education. If this bill passes, it will make Ohio less attractive to students, graduates, and employers alike. I urge this committee to consider the long-term consequences of this legislation and vote no on Senate Bill 1.