

Testimony of Dawn Hubbell-Staeble, Teaching Professor of English
Before the Senate Higher Education Committee
Senator Kristina Roegner, Chair
February 9, 2025

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingram, and Members of the Higher Education Committee:

My name is Dawn Hubbell-Staeble, and I am a teaching professor of English, specializing in Composition and Rhetoric at Bowling Green State University, where I have taught for 35 years. I am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 1.

I want to begin by discussing how SB1's changes to collective bargaining would harm Ohio's \$68.9 billion higher education economy. The bill strips faculty of basic bargaining rights over workload, evaluations, tenure, and retrenchment, while also removing our right to strike. At BGSU, our current collective bargaining process creates a balanced partnership that benefits our students. Through collaborative and collective bargaining, we maintain high educational standards while efficiently managing university resources. As someone who teaches essential workplace skills like writing, research, communication, and critical thinking, I can attest that undermining faculty working conditions will ultimately compromise the quality of education we provide to Ohio's future workforce.

Regarding civic literacy requirements, while civic education is crucial, it would be more effective to strengthen these programs in secondary schools where we can reach all Ohio students, not just those who attend college. The state invests \$2 billion annually in public higher education, receiving a remarkable \$68.9 billion in economic impact from our 14 public universities. This demonstrates that our current approach effectively prepares students for professional success.

A strong professorate supported by collective bargaining benefits the state economy directly. Let me provide a personal example. When my first child started college in 2011, we qualified for full Pell Grants. After BGSU faculty unionized, my salary increased and stabilized. By 2018, my improved financial situation meant my youngest child didn't qualify for any Pell Grant, indicating a substantial change in my family's standard of living. That increased income went directly back into Ohio's economy.

The success of our graduates proves the effectiveness of our current system. My own children, educated in Ohio's public universities, now contribute directly to the state's economy—two recruit workers for Ohio industries, including technology and aerospace, while another works on Department of Defense contracts. They succeed because of the critical thinking and communication skills they developed in college—the very skills SB1 threatens to diminish.

Contrary to misconception, professors already undergo rigorous evaluation. Every semester, I am evaluated by students and annually by colleagues, department chairs, college committees, and deans. These evaluations determine merit raises and continued employment. The additional review process in SB1 is redundant and unnecessary.

Requirements like public syllabus posting with searchable keywords create unnecessary administrative burdens without improving education quality. As members of a political party known for advocating small government, this seems contradictory. The reporting requirements would divert resources away from our core mission of preparing Ohio's future workforce.

I ask you to vote NO on this redundant and harmful bill that threatens a system proven successful by both educational outcomes and economic impact.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I urge you to vote to protect the economy of Ohio and the competitiveness of Ohio's workforce, by voting NO on SB 1