

Testimony of Ashley Galati, Ph.D
Before the Senate Higher Education Committee
Senator Kristina Roegner, Chair
February 10, 2025

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

My name is Dr Ashley Galati, and I am a professor of Psychological Sciences at Kent State University Tuscarawas, where I have taught for 12 years. I do not represent Kent State, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 1 (SB1).

Not only does this bill erode the rights of faculty labor unions, but would set dangerous precedent for all labor unions in the state. Labor statistics (US Bureau of Labor Statistics) indicate that Ohio maintains a proportion of unionized workers above the national average; suggesting that the workers within the state value their collective right to bargain. Further, to legislate rules around bargaining conflicts with the role and responsibilities of SERB, creating greater bureaucracy and conflict within state organizations. In a climate where inflation and living expenses quickly outpace wages, eroding our collective bargaining abilities will make it difficult for faculty to live and work in the state.

Additionally, language contained in the bill will have a negative impact on academic freedom, censoring faculty both in their research and in the classroom. This censorship will serve to drive academics to other states, negatively impacting the state's economy. A recent independent analysis on behalf of the Inter-University Council highlights the importance of higher education institutions in Ohio, with one in eight jobs supported by the 14 public institutions, and a total economic impact of \$68.9 billion (iuc-ohio.org). Further analysis by SOCHE indicates that the 22 colleges and universities in their membership generated a total economic impact of \$7.5 billion in 2019 (soche.org). The language contained within SB1 is likely to drive away academics, as seen in other states which have passed similar bills; and without these robust institutions of higher education, the state is looking to lose tens of billions of dollars in economic revenue.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Ashley Galati, Ph.D