

Monday, February 10, 2025

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Jacqueline McAllister. I am an associate professor of political science at Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

My goal is to equip my students with the tools they need to explain and understand the world in which they live. I pride myself on offering them a thorough perspective on politics, past and present. This means that I ask them to consider an array of topics and readings from a range of political thinkers and commenters. Thus, students—whether from the left or right or somewhere in-between—must engage with counterarguments. In so doing, they come to appreciate, understand, and love their opposition, as well as deepen their understanding of their own and others' views. In so doing, they develop the tools they need to address the innumerable challenges we all face today.

I oppose SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6 because it would irreparably harm my ability to challenge students—whether from the right, left, in-between, and/or of any other political persuasion—to deepen their understanding of their views, and that of their opposition. It would mean that Ohio's students would be ill-equipped to critically engage with diverse perspectives in today's world, which they must do if they are to effectively navigate it. The strongest arguments are the ones that understand counterarguments, as well as find a way to bridge, versus deepen divides through the simple act of listening and trying to understand.

In short, SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6 would fundamentally compromise the vigorous pursuit of knowledge, the free exchange of ideas, and academic freedom—key pillars of a vibrant democracy.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline McAllister