

Chairman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lisa F. Lazarus, and I am a parent and a business owner in Ohio. I am submitting this written testimony today in opposition to Senate Bill 1 because I want my child and all children to want to go to college in Ohio, I see firsthand how vital it is to keep our brightest students in-state, and this bill will only accelerate their departure.

As the parent of an only child, I want my daughter to have access to the best education possible—one that sharpens her critical thinking, encourages meaningful conversations, and prepares her to thrive in a diverse world. This bill is trying to inject political interference into university curricula, undermining the ability of institutions to provide a well-rounded, independent education. Eliminating DEI programs signals that Ohio doesn't value inclusion or equitable opportunity, which is not the kind of message I want my child to learn. On top of that, stripping faculty members of collective bargaining rights weakens our universities, making it harder to attract and keep the best educators. I want my daughter to have the option to stay in Ohio for a top-tier education and a meaningful career—but this bill puts that at risk. Please vote against Senate Bill 1.

As a business owner, I know the importance of having a skilled workforce and a thriving economy in our state. If this bill passes, students will start looking elsewhere for their education—states where they feel valued, where academic freedom is respected, and where they can study and speak about the topics that matter to them. Ohio's current brain drain is apparent. I was part of it, choosing to leave Ohio for college, graduate schools, and the initial decades of my career. I returned with the hopes that Ohio would still be a great place to raise my child and wanting, with my company, to invest in the future of our state. However, if our own state legislature undermines the credibility of Ohio's institutions, the exodus we've been seeing will only worsen, and it will be hard for business owners to want to stay here.

I want Ohio to be a place where businesses can thrive, where young professionals choose to stay and build their futures. If we weaken our higher education system, we will lose both students and the businesses that rely on them. This bill does not serve the long-term interests of Ohio's economy, and I strongly urge you to vote against it.

Thank you,

Lisa F. Lazarus