

Testimony of Amy Koshoffer, MLIS, MS  
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 Amy Koshoffer and I am a Librarian at the University of Cincinnati. I do not represent the University of Cincinnati but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen.

I strongly oppose SB 1.

This is the third time in the past year that I submitted testimony in opposition to senate bills that promotes a narrow perspective on how our public universities in Ohio should function. SB1 aims to fix a problem that our university faculty, our students, and our state businesses do not feel needs a fix. As elected public officials, your role is to listen to and act on the will of the people. Forms of this legislation containing similar language have already been rejected by most people giving prior testimony, and this demonstrates that the people of Ohio want a different environment at our universities than this bill promotes.

This bill contains language that is very vague and will cause confusion and possibly hamper the intellectual development of our students. For example, the phrases "Controversial belief or policy" and "intellectual diversity" could be applied when faculty want to educate on topics such as politics, sociology, biology etc. Students can claim their intellectual diversity is being denied because they argue for their opinion, not evidence-based facts. Despite the expertise and scholarship of the faculty, students can make erroneous claims counter to what is already understood as fact by global communities. It is if we are asking our students to ignore what is going on in our world and act on what they believe rather dig into issues and understand the evidence. The world is a complicated, messy place with great variation in ideas and perspectives. We need to train our students to navigate complex problems, gather and understand evidence, and learn to work with people who will challenge their world view. The way the bill is written, faculty may not feel secure to hold class discussions about ideas that even just one student could deem a controversial issue. We will do our students a disservice as they will not have the experience of assuring themselves of their own beliefs and learning to defend their beliefs with evidence. In higher education, faculty guide students to develop information and data literacy skills and learn to understand what makes evidence and how it supports their arguments. We are not indoctrinating our students with only a liberal viewpoint rather faculty are developing courses around long time research and peer reviewed scholarship. By having discussions about difficult topics, faculty and instructors in Ohio's public universities help students prepare to tackle the wicked problems that have eluded solutions until now.

And as a woman, the language in the bill about collective bargaining is very upsetting. Women earn less money than their male counterparts. The ability to advocate for better working conditions is empowered by the collective and there is no plan in place to help faculty increase salaries or even to keep them up with the cost of living. Ohio public universities already have lower salaries than other public institutions in other states. Taking away collective bargaining will mean our salaries will not keep up with the cost of living and will make it hard to continue to keep the great faculty we have and to recruit new faculty members.

This bill only seems to be an attack on higher education but does not offer incentives and ideas for investing in higher education and the amazing people that make it work. I am a long-time bearcat and am proud of my university and the work we do to prepare our students for the future. This bill only makes that job harder.

I strongly oppose SB 1.