

Testimony of Katie Graber, PhD
Before the Senate Higher Education Committee
Senator Kristina Roegner, Chair
February 11, 2025

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

My name is Katie Graber, and I am a professor of musicology in the School of Music at The Ohio State University, where I have taught for over ten years. I do not represent Ohio State University, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 1.

As a college professor and administrator, I am concerned about the budget implications and the loss of students who will go out of state to avoid this attack on free speech. I am concerned that faculty will not have the freedom to self govern and design courses the way they believe will be best for teaching and learning.

SB 1 and HB 6 impose unprecedented levels of political interference and unnecessary micromanagement on Ohio's colleges and universities, severely undermining the integrity of our higher education system. These are the same reasons that the bill faced strong bipartisan legislative opposition in the last session and failed to advance. This is not a partisan issue.

SB 1 and HB 6 legislate the manner in which certain topics can be addressed and the way in which professors manage their classrooms, creating restraints on academic freedom and making it more difficult for Ohio's colleges and universities to attract and retain students and faculty. These bills also create an unprecedented number of unworkable and costly unfunded mandates, most of which are simply more burdensome versions of what our colleges and universities already do. SB 1 and HB 6 also attack workers' rights by attempting to prohibit fundamental collective bargaining subjects and the right to strike for faculty, who have every right to advocate for themselves and their students.

None of this advances higher education. Instead it distracts from real problems in higher education that we need to address: increased tuition and debt, student retention and completion, and drastic reductions in academic programs and full-time faculty positions.

Please reject these bills, which could do real, irreversible damage to Ohio higher education. Please vote no on SB 1/HB 6!