

Testimony of Jin Jun, PhD, RN
Before the Senate Higher Education Committee
Senator Kristina Roegner, Chair
Feb 11, 2025

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

My name is Jin Jun, and I am a nurse, healthcare workforce researcher, and an assistant professor of Nursing at the Ohio State University. I do not represent the Ohio State University or the College of Nursing but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen and a nurse in opposition to Senate Bill 1.

I have serious concerns about the detrimental effects of increased political oversight and control of higher education in healthcare and nursing education. As an expert in healthcare workforce, I am also deeply concerned about the impact of this legislation's shift of educational control from the Ohio Department of Education to a new Department of Education and Workforce on our already fragile workforce. There are three main areas that I want to highlight:

First, Senate Bill 1 can and will compromise and weaken the quality of nursing, medical, and public health education. Robust evidence-based learning and training are the cornerstone of our healthcare advancement in all areas of our curricula. Political influence over these curricula will leave our next generation of healthcare workers under or unprepared to handle the ever complex and changing challenges of health and healthcare. For example, without proper education on individualized treatment, a nurse might not realize that around 8-10% of people with European ancestry have a genetic variation that makes them poor metabolizers of certain medication like codeine or anti-depressants, resulting in reduced effectiveness of pain management and potential treatment failure.¹ Or that Black patients with hypertension respond poorly to ACE inhibitors.² All these can lead to worse patient outcomes and higher costs to healthcare. Higher education institutions provide students with opportunities to learn. This overly broad and extremely controversial bill strips universities and its educators of their ability to educate students and imposes unconstitutional restrictions on their First Amendment freedoms. Just because some lawmakers don't like certain topics, does not mean they should abuse their legislative power to destroy the quality of education that is essential to grow the next generation of providers and healthcare workers. Everyone should have the freedom to learn the correct contents in our state. SB 1 creates numerous problems and solves none. This Higher Education Destruction Act is bad for students, bad for higher education, and bad for Ohio.

Second, this legislation could undermine the growth of healthcare workforce at a time when Ohio faces unprecedented workforce challenges. While the bill emphasizes career and technical education, it prioritizes short-term workforce needs over the thorough

academic preparation crucial for healthcare professions. Nursing is not a vocational job. We are rooted in strong foundations in biology, chemistry, and human anatomy to provide the best and most effective care to those in need. To continue to grow the next generation of nurses who can provide quality care for your fathers, mothers, children, and families, we need nurses who can think critically, adapt to evolving medical knowledge, and provide evidence-based, patient-centered care. Research consistently shows that higher levels of nursing education led to better patient outcomes. Hospitals with more BSN-prepared nurses have lower patient mortality and failure-to-rescue rates. Specifically, a 10% increase in BSN-prepared nurses is linked to a 4% decrease in patient deaths.³ These findings highlight the critical role of advanced nursing education in improving care quality and patient safety. Furthermore, there is already 14% of vacancy in hospital nursing positions and 10% shortage of nurses across the state of Ohio.⁴ More alarmingly, more than 60% of nurses –that’s three out of every five nurses– are considering leaving bedside nursing.⁴ It is without a doubt that the politicization of higher education will increase the already growing strain on Ohio’s ongoing shortage of nurses, physicians, and other healthcare workers, Ohio cannot afford to weaken the education pipeline that supplies these professionals. A well-educated and scientifically literate workforce is essential to sustaining high-quality healthcare in our state, especially in underserved rural and urban communities.

Third, nurses have the Code of Ethics, which is the definitive standard for ethical nursing practice.⁵ This essential resource guides nurses as we make patient care and practice decisions in today’s complex healthcare environment. The first code of ethics of nurses is that the nurse practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of every person. We establish a trusting relationship and advocates for the rights, health, and safety of recipient(s) of nursing care. And we advance the profession through multiple approaches to knowledge development, professional standards, and the generation of policies for nursing, health, and social concerns. SB 1’s control of higher education fundamentally conflicts with core principles of the Code of Ethics upheld by 200,000 nurses in Ohio and over 4 million nurses in the United States. By restricting comprehensive health education and introducing political oversight of curricula, the bill undermines nurses’ ethical obligations to provide evidence-based care and protect patient rights to complete health information. The legislation’s emphasis on workforce development over rigorous scientific education could compromise nurses’ ability to maintain professional competence, advance the profession through research, and make informed clinical decisions. This shift away from evidence-based education directly contradicts nurses’ ethical duty to promote public health through scientific knowledge and address social determinants of health. Furthermore, the bill’s structure could impair nurses’ professional responsibility to shape healthcare education policy and maintain high educational standards. Most critically, by potentially diluting scientific education standards, SB 1 risks producing future nurses who may struggle to fulfill their ethical

obligation to provide the highest quality, evidence-based care to their patients and communities.

In conclusion, I urge the Committee to consider SB 1's impact on health education and healthcare workforce development. Instead of increasing political influence over curricula and prioritize short-term workforce needs over comprehensive academic preparation, Ohio should strengthen its commitment to evidence-based science education, respect the expertise of faculties who teach, and ensuring that students are well-prepared to pursue careers in healthcare. I urge you to oppose SB 1 to protect Ohio's nursing and healthcare education system and its future healthcare professionals. Ohio's future healthcare system depends on well-educated, scientifically literate professionals. We cannot afford to compromise the educational foundation that produces our next generation of healthcare workers.

Respectfully submitted,

Jin Jun, PhD, RN
Nurse and concerned citizen

Footnotes:

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4. Ohio Nurses Association (2024). ONA Survey of all Ohio Nurses: 2024 Staffing Findings. <https://ohnurses.org/2024ohionursessurvey/>
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