

Testimony of Lori Vincent, Ph.D., BCBA-D  
Before the Senate Higher Education Committee  
Senator Kristina Roegner, Chair  
February 7, 2025

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

My name is Lori Vincent, and I am an Assistant Professor at the University of Cincinnati. I do not represent the University of Cincinnati but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen.

I am writing in strong opposition of Ohio Senate Bill 1. One of the reasons I began teaching in higher education was to engage in meaningful conversations with diverse thinkers, understand other perspectives, and to inspire students to think for themselves and form their own opinions. In my classes, and those I have observed of my colleagues, students are invited to share their opinions and views openly. There are diverse perspectives of our students and faculty and these conversations and ability to speak freely are what ensure intellectual diversity within higher education. This bill does not improve intellectual diversity but rather limits the ability of faculty and students to speak openly and share ideas on many important topics. If equality and intellectual diversity is the goal, censorship in higher education will not accomplish those goals. My work and research focus on supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities across the lifespan. My work is diversity, equity, and inclusion. I appreciate that others may not view these issues the same way I do, and I am always happy to engage in conversations that allow me to learn from someone else's perspective and them from mine. Open dialogue, diverse perspectives and opinions, and the ability to respectfully disagree are foundational to intellectual diversity. This bill would not only limit my ability to adequately teach my students, but it would also limit my rights as a worker in the state of Ohio. In addition to eliminating diversity, equity, and inclusion, this bill also proposes to remove the ability for faculty to strike. My priority will always be to educate my students and remain in the classroom, and a strike would be a last resort for me. At the same time, taking away the ability of faculty to strike, limits our rights and ability to negotiate for fair pay and work conditions. To me- this is a basic right of workers.

Ohio is home to some of the best public schools in the country. The passing of this bill will significantly change the quality and scope of our educational programs, which will limit the ability to attract and retain high quality faculty and students. This will have a significant impact long-term on the Ohio workforce. I strongly believe that public higher education can be improved. I also strongly believe this bill does the opposite. If the state of Ohio seeks to improve its public universities, this should be done *with* faculty, students and administrators in higher education.