Testimony of Sandy Wong, PhD
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:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony against Senate Bill 1. My name is Sandy Wong, and I am an Assistant Professor of Geography at The Ohio State University. I do not represent OSU; I am submitting testimony as a private citizen to strongly oppose SB 1.

Senate Bill 1 is a dangerous, big-government bill that will cost Ohio's ability to attract and retain first-rate students and faculty, and it will hurt Ohio's economy. Prior to joining OSU in Fall 2023, I was an Assistant Professor at Florida State University, where I experienced firsthand the damage of Florida's regulations on higher education. When I received the job offer from OSU in January 2023, I was eager to leave FSU. There, faculty were concerned about the erosion of academic freedom and morale was low. Many faculty actively sought employment elsewhere and units were having difficulty retaining faculty. Units were also struggling and continue to struggle to hire exceptional faculty for vacant positions. The unstable and hostile academic environment makes it challenging to recruit excellent students. The brain drain means that the local economy loses skilled workers and tax revenue, and students lose access to innovative researchers and educators who can prepare them to be competitive in the job market. I strongly urge you to avoid steering Ohio in the same destructive path as Florida.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful bill. SB 1 will stifle free speech and honest conversations. It will hurt Ohio's ability to recruit the best students and faculty, and it will encourage students and faculty to go elsewhere. SB 1 is bad for students, higher education, and Ohio. Let us focus our energy instead on making sure that Ohio continues to thrive and to have a world-class higher education system that trains the next generation of leaders.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony.

Sincerely,

Sandy Wong