

Opponent Testimony to SB1

Senate Higher Education Committee

February 7, 2025

Shawn L. Easley, PhD

Associate Professor of Political Science

Chair: Kristina D. Roegner

Vice Chair: Jerry C. Cirino

Ranking member: Catherine D. Ingram

Committee Members Kyle Koehler, Bill Reineke, Jane M. Timkin, Casey Weinstein

Madam Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Members,

Thank you for welcoming public debate and specifically my testimony in opposition to SB1, the Enact Advance Ohio Education Act. As a civics education practitioner for nearly 30 years, prioritizing the advancement of civic education is music to my ears. However, as discussed in Sec. 3345.382, the creation of a course specifically to teach the items detailed in the section defeats one of the stated goals of the Act which is to encourage diverse academic perspectives. Course curriculum is, and has always been, the purview of the professionals who teach it; it should and must remain that way.

According to Thomas Jefferson, our democracy's success requires an educated electorate. Achieving that imperative is every historian and political scientist's number one goal. What we need to do is continue to bring our collective wisdom, training and perspectives to bear on this, not a top-down driven curriculum conceived by well-intentioned non-practitioners.

In Ohio, the richness and quality of our lives comes from our diverse cultures and communities. At my institution, that translates to appealing to the broadest possible reaches of Clevelanders/Ohioans. Let us continue to do what we do best by meeting them where they live in our unique disparate ways.

Thank you again for the opportunity to weigh in on this vitally important legislation and please vote no on it in its current form.

Very best regards, Shawn Easley, Cleveland Heights, OH.