

Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 1

Submitted by : Jennifer Winner

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To: Senator Roegner and Members of the Committee

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee

My name is Jennifer Winner, and I am representing myself in this testimony today. I have a degree in Elementary Education and taught middle school for a few years. After I had kids, I began volunteering in our public schools from kindergarten through 12th grade. I also substitute taught in our local school for many years. I now have 2 college age kids attending Ohio schools. We researched long and hard to find colleges and universities in Ohio which would meet each of my children's needs. Both are in the sciences and were looking for professors and programs who were teaching and researching their desired areas. Both were specifically looking for schools with a diverse group of students. And finally, both wanted schools which were LGBTQ+ safe. We found those schools in Ohio. However, with this bill, all that could be lost.

My oldest child will be graduating this year with a degree in Physics, Computer Science, and Astronomy from Case Western Reserve University. One of the reasons we chose that school is because they gave our student the Choose Ohio First scholarship. This scholarship is given to students going into STEM fields to encourage them to choose Ohio schools and to get a job in Ohio in these fields when they graduate. Grad school was going to be the next step, but we have decided to pause that for a year because of all the chaos of the new administration and proposed laws like these. When my oldest does decide to go to grad school, it most likely will have to be in a different state because these bills will try to limit what the professors could teach and what they could research. My youngest may have to transfer to an out of state school if these bills pass and make it unsafe for our LGBTQ+ students.

Not only will Ohio lose MANY talented, smart, driven students who will choose out-of-state schools, Ohio will also lose money. Statistically, these students will probably not choose to come back to Ohio after college which also hurts our state.

SB 1/HB 6 are examples of big government overreach. These bills would create unprecedented levels of political interference and unnecessary micromanagement on Ohio's colleges and universities. How can our higher education systems have integrity if their curriculum is controlled by the government? This is not a partisan issue which is why

the bill faced strong bipartisan legislative opposition in the last session and failed to advance.

I think what infuriates me the most is that SB 1 and HB 6 claim to promote "intellectual diversity" while simultaneously attempting to legislate the way certain topics can be addressed and the way in which professors manage their classrooms. This is completely against the First Amendment and destroys academic freedom. My students want to learn from expert faculty who aren't silenced by partisan politicians.

Don't get me wrong, there are plenty of problems in higher education! This committee should be discussing and doing something about increased tuition and debt, student retention and completion, and reductions in academic programs and full-time faculty positions. SB 1/HB 6 does NONE of this and will not add value to our colleges and universities. Please oppose this bill!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Winner

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