

Lindsay Milam: Testimony in Opposition of SB1

I care deeply about education for many reasons: my son is a freshman at a public high school here in Ohio; my husband is a K-3 Intervention Specialist with an urban public school system here in Ohio; I am a professor at an urban campus of a community college here in Ohio. My life revolves around education.

My history also revolves around education. My mother was a public school teacher here in Ohio for over 20 years. My father graduated from an Ohio community college after being downsized from his factory job, and that degree made our family solvent again. My sister and I both graduated with advanced degrees from universities here in Ohio.

I've always been proud of the education my family and I have received here in Ohio. I'm also proud of what my husband and I do in our classrooms, fostering environments where all students feel valued and safe and are encouraged to learn and pursue their goals and follow their dreams. And I'm supremely proud of how my son is being encouraged to pursue his goals and follow his dreams by his teachers, too.

What I see in Senate Bill 1 is an attack on education in our state. I'm profoundly concerned with how education will change in Ohio if it passes. This bill will affect my son's future college plans because it stifles free speech in the classroom by restricting what is taught. This bill will affect my husband's students who may not be able to afford college because the bill puts exorbitant costs on schools to comply with mandatory curriculum changes and administrative structures. This bill will affect my students because they will feel afraid to express their thoughts and views and opinions.

Frankly put, Senate Bill 1 looks to solve imaginary problems. If Senator Cirino agreed to any of the requests from me and my colleagues to visit our classrooms and see what truly happens, he would find that we are not indoctrinating our students with biased, liberal ideas. If I had the power to control my students, I would use it to make sure they had a safe place to live, enough food for them to feed themselves and their families, access to reliable and affordable technology so that they can complete their assignments, and enough time for them to balance school, work, caregiving, and still enough hours to get a good nights' sleep.

THOSE are the problems that Senator Cirino and the other leaders here in Ohio should be focusing on. As a lifelong citizen and voter, I'm extremely angry that Senate Bill 1 is the priority instead of growing our economy by attracting businesses and young talent to Ohio. I'm extremely angry that Senate Bill 1 is the priority instead of reducing the cost of housing and groceries. I'm extremely angry that Senate Bill 1 is the priority instead of finding solutions to the opioid epidemic that affects all areas of Ohio, no matter race, class, gender, age, or any other demographic. I'm extremely angry that Senate Bill 1 is the priority instead of providing access to affordable healthcare, protecting our valuable water and land resources, and reducing crime and violence in our cities.

In closing, would you like to know yet another reason why I care deeply about education? Education fosters creativity, critical thinking, and curiosity, which then leads to people collaborating to solve the problems that should be the true priorities here in Ohio.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

