

**Opponent Testimony for SB1” Enact Advance Ohio Higher Education Act”
Senate Higher Education Committee, Date of Testimony**

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

I am Dr. Daniela Jauk-Ajamie, 50 years old, a resident of Summit County. I am writing to you today as a concerned US citizen, as a parent, and as a former international student in our beautiful state, and I do not represent any organization.

I strongly oppose Senate Bill 1. I oppose the entire bill but think that the prohibition of diversity, equity, and inclusion and the weakening of shared governance in higher education institutions are particularly **detrimental to Ohio’s economy and national and international competitiveness.**

I came to Ohio in 2007 as an international Fulbright student to pursue my graduate degree. As you are undoubtedly aware, **international students pay up to double the tuition fees** and can be a **mitigating factor if we look at the demographic cliff in Ohio’s student population** that has caused Ohio’s universities to struggle financially. I brought a Fulbright scholarship and other international grant money, international contacts and networks, and prestige to the University of Akron (UA). I was attracted to UA because of the high quality of education and the inclusive and diverse environment that is characterized by many first-generation and working-class students. Back then, UA had an impressively diverse and international student and faculty body.

The proposed SB1 simultaneously calls for “multiple, divergent, and varied perspectives on an extensive range of public policy issues,” yet outlaws speakers, teaching and dissemination of critical theories that spark generative and diverse discussions and practices on campus. This seems **anti-scientific** and equals censorship. It makes true research and state-of-the-art teaching impossible as censorship defies the logic of discovery. It is equally **unattractive to American and overseas students** to get only half the education, and **they will choose universities in states that allow for freedom of speech and academic discovery** based in the full range of theories and methodologies available.

States known for limiting content to “politically acceptable” messages are suffering **damage to their reputation, both domestically and internationally.** This makes it harder to attract top students and faculty. International students often rely on rankings and reputation when choosing a university. In addition, SB1 signals that Ohio campuses are not open to diverse viewpoints, potentially deterring students from different cultural, religious, or political backgrounds. **Ohio should stay open for (and improve!) business with international students who bring in money and seek inclusive environments where their perspectives are valued.**

Last but not least, as a parent of an 11-year old child, I want her to go to a college that prepares her to thrive in global competition. I want her classrooms to be environments where we practice American values of liberty and justice for all, where we “**do**” **democracy and allow for all opinions and perspectives to be shared.** We need unity in this state and in this country, and we cannot achieve it by calling each other out; we need to call each other in to **high-quality intellectual inquiry and critical thinking that will attract domestic out-of-state and international students alike.**

I ask that you please consider my testimony and **vote NO on SB1.**

Thank you. I’m happy to answer any questions.