



## HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Witness Form

Today's Date 2/10/25

Name: Marc Bockrath

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Organization Representing: myself

Testifying on Bill Number: SB1

Testimony:  Verbal  Written  Both Testifying As:

Proponent  Opponent  Interested Party Are you a Registered Lobbyist?

Yes  No

Special Requests: \_\_\_\_\_

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Written testimony is a public record and may be posted on the Ohio Senate's website

Testimony of Dr. Marc Bockrath, Ph.D.  
Before the Senate Higher Education Committee  
Senator Kristina D. Roegner, Chair

February 10, 2025

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

My name is Marc Bockrath, and I am a professor of Physics at The Ohio State University, where I have taught for 8 years. I do not represent OSU, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 1.

I am writing this personal testimony in regard to State bill 1. First, a similar bill was proposed recently, received overwhelming public opposition and very little support, and failed to pass. Many groups, including unions, underprivileged minorities, and college students and instructors were nearly all united against the previous version. The Ohio State University board of trustees also came out publically against it. Given this, it is not clear why nearly the same bill is being proposed again with all the same flaws as before.

Here I will give my opinion on only one of the many problematic aspects of the bill. Part of bill 1 (Section 3345.453, lines 968-1016 in the current bill) describes legislation to require post-tenure reviews, **a de facto elimination of tenure protections.**

A key ideal of conservatism is that before changing something, one should first clearly articulate why something exists in the first place. **Academic tenure forms the cornerstone of academic freedom.** This is the best way of insuring that researchers are able to engage in the kind of free inquiry that is necessary for the task, free from political and social pressures. Indeed, supreme court justices have lifetime appointments for the similar reasons, so that they are able to interpret the law free of immediate political pressures. Partners at law firms, consulting companies, and academic physicians have similar protections as well. Removing these protections would severely weaken the ability of faculty at OSU to perform high quality research.

**Removing tenure protection would also have many practical downsides. For example, if Ohio repeals tenure** while other states, such as Michigan, Illinois and many others retain their protections for academic freedom, **recruitment and retention of high quality faculty is likely to become much more difficult.** Higher education in the state of Ohio would most likely become second-rate as the best and brightest flee the state or are never able to be hired to begin with. This is especially an issue when trying to attract further and prolonged investment by high technology corporations such as Intel. For these reasons, I believe this bill would likely cause serious and possibly irreparable harm to higher education and research in Ohio, and I urge you to vote no on this bill.