

Testimony of Carmen Winant, MFA, MA
Before the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee

February 9, 2025

To the Members of the Higher Education Committee:

My name is Carmen Winant, and I am a full professor of Art at The Ohio State University, where I have taught for almost seven years. I do not represent OSU, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in **opposition to Senate Bill 1**.

There is so much that I find deeply trouble about this bill, from the weakening of tenure to the abolition of diversity initiatives. But perhaps the most disturbing and contradictory component of the bill (however cloaked in euphemistic language) are the way it uses the cover of “intellectual diversity” to whitewash the most challenging parts of our history. My number one job as a teacher is to develop creative and critical thinking skills; I cannot do this, under any circumstances, if the government undermines me in the classroom by micromanaging higher education and censors me as I speak to systems of embedded power and injustice.

On one hand, SB 1 aims to promote “intellectual diversity”; on the other, its provision aims to suppress any “controversial beliefs or policies” (including but not limited to “climate policies, electoral politics, foreign policy, diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, immigration policy, marriage, and abortion”). The agenda here is crystal clear, and frighteningly ideological.

This bill would be *incredibly*, indubitably harmful. I cannot stress that enough. My colleagues and students and I are watching closely; we remain committed to using our classrooms as spaces of open exchange, growth, and intellectual and creative challenge. I urge you not to move forward with it. Please take it from us, the educators who work firsthand with students every day in the classrooms.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Carmen Winant" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Carmen Winant

Professor
Roy Lichtenstein Chair of Studio
Art The Ohio State University