

**Opponent Testimony for SB1  
Higher Education Committee  
February 7, 2025**

**Heather A. Pierce  
Concerned Citizen of Ohio**

Chair Kristina Roegner and members of the Higher Education Committee:

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony in opposition to SB1. I am a retired public servant, mother and grandmother and I live in Westlake.

I am in strong opposition to SB1, more specifically the limitations it places on public institutions and professors in the areas of DEI programming and education/dialog on issues considered "controversial". The language in SB1 is so vague that it opens public institutions up to potential constant litigation and prevents even basic things like an earth day celebration or minority studies.

I worked as a public health professional for over 30 years and received my degree through Cleveland State University. Two of my children attended public universities -- The Ohio State University and University of Cincinnati. I feel strongly that public universities have a responsibility to reach out to marginalized populations and to provide a well rounded education where all voices and perspectives are represented. I know I would not have been as effective in my career had I not been exposed to and required to learn about beliefs that were different from my own. It gave me perspective and the ability to work with people from all walks of life and political affiliations -a skill needed in all areas of business. My children feel the same having led a mostly sheltered existence prior to university life. Note that "controversial beliefs" are more times than not- "minority beliefs".

How are today's young adults going to grow into productive cooperative citizens capable of expanding their minds to respond to the needs of the greater society if not everyone's voices are heard and those who have historically gone without a voice are silenced once again.

I urge you to vote NO in SB1 and stand up for what's right. Our public institutions have a long history of moving us in the right direction on critical issues while the private sector lags behind. Please don't cripple their ability to provide a well rounded experience for students.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.