

February 9, 2025

The Honorable Kristina D. Roegner, Chair

Senate Higher Education Committee

Ohio Senate

1 Capitol Square

Columbus, Ohio 43215

Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony on Senate Bill 1 Enact Advance Ohio Higher Education Act introduced by Senator Cirino. This is the reintroduction of SB 83 from the 135th General Assembly which was greatly opposed by a large number of higher education members and organizations. It undermines academic freedom and a means for faculty to negotiate equitable working environments.

Higher education should challenge one's beliefs and opinions by providing the information to support or refute those beliefs and opinions. Exchange of ideas and opinions must occur in a safe environment to promote the understanding and respect for diversity while exploring the foundations beliefs and opinions are anchored in.

Faculty remain in positions not for financial security but for their devotion to learners and passion for what they do. Collective bargaining provides an avenue for faculty to negotiate improved working conditions and salaries that will allow for qualified faculty to choose to continue to provide a level of education that will contribute to improved individual and societal outcomes. By reducing collective bargaining impasses to a final best offer, leaves no recourse for working condition improvements and the loss of quality educators. The learner will pay the ultimate price with a less than quality education.

Post-secondary education already has a negative image and its return on investment is in question. There is a change in focus on the type of education that creates a higher quality of life with a greater return on investment. The focus needs to turn to how to make education more affordable for Ohioans and not dictating what can and cannot be a part of curriculum. The focus should be on increasing the understanding and respect for diversity, equity and inclusion while supporting faculty that will challenge and support the beliefs and opinions of learners.

Thank you again for permitting this testimony in opposition to SB 1 Enact Advance Ohio Higher Education Act.

Respectfully submitted,

Tamara J. Meyer