

Karen Eliot
February 9, 2025

I am a retired professor from the Ohio State University and I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 1. The proposed bill threatens academic freedom by increasing political control over what universities are allowed to teach and it constrains the subject matter that can be addressed in the classroom. As someone who taught for nearly three decades at OSU, I hope that the most important skills my students gained from my classes are the abilities to engage in their own rigorous research and to develop the critical reasoning that they can apply to their further endeavors. As professors, our job is not to limit or constrain our students in their studies but to encourage them to explore, experiment, make mistakes, innovate, and create new knowledge. We can only do that by allowing them to engage with a full range of opinions, arguments, and perspectives. In other words, they need to deal with the subjects that affect them in the worlds of work and life that they are entering into.

There are other problems with this bill: it eliminates DEI programs which will result in harm to underserved people who would be shut out of university educations without the grants and fellowships that allow them to flourish. (Please see the moving editorial essay by a student from Appalachia who owes her education at Miami University to just kind of grant program that will be cut under this bill. Columbus Dispatch, *Conversations*. February 9, 2025).

SB1 threatens faculty rights, and denies students their free speech rights and their abilities to engage in student activism and advocacy. We should be encouraging, and not forbidding, their participation in areas that concern them and the world they inherit from us. This is just the kind of active engagement that facilitates their learning.

The kind of creativity and critical thinking that we want to nurture in our students will be tamped down if this bill passes. In no way should we be limiting the potential of our next generations—instead, we need to give them the excitement and opportunities to learn and innovate.

I urge you to oppose this bill. Thank you for your attention.

Karen Eliot, Professor Emerita