

Heather Thompson-Gillis
9 February 2025

Subject: Strong Opposition to Senate Bill 1- Protect Faculty Rights and Collective Bargaining

Dear Committee:

I am writing as a concerned community college faculty member to strongly oppose Senate Bill 1. This problematic bill undermines academic freedom and collective bargaining rights. More importantly, it causes harm to our students.

Senate Bill 1 attacks any addition of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in the campus experience. However, student success rates have only increased with our department's investment in DEI. DEI-informed pedagogy helps all students find their voice in the classroom and all benefit from this important work. The greatest strength of community colleges is their diverse student population. By having challenging conversations about identity in class, students learn from each other and grow to be better critical thinkers and more empathetic people. Senate Bill 1 has a chilling effect on this essential work. This bill undermines faculty expertise and silences our students. The restrictions it puts in place would make it nearly impossible to teach my Composition and American Literature classes in an ethical way that recognizes decades of research into pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching. My students are smart, resilient, and thoughtful and often share how much they appreciate bringing their lives and experiences into the classroom. I learn from them each day and teaching them is one of the great privileges of my life. They deserve the best professors, and I can't do my job well under the regulations of Senate Bill 1.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please take a stand against this harmful legislation and instead support policies that respect faculty expertise, uphold academic freedom, and protect collective bargaining. Ohio college students deserve better than Senate Bill 1.

Sincerely,

Dr. Heather Thompson-Gillis
Professor of English