

Testimony of Valerie Lines, MA., Assistant Professor

Before the Senate Higher Education Committee

Senator Kristina Roegner, Chair

February 9, 2025

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingram, and Members of the Higher Education Committee,

My name is Valerie Lines, and I am an assistant professor and music archivist at Jerome Library at Bowling Green State University. I do not represent Bowling Green State University but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 1.

I recently upended my life, and the life of my family, to move to Ohio for a tenure-track job in higher education. This is a job that promised security and opportunity to buy a home and have children. Not only to be able to afford to have children, but to support them and all their needs as they grow into Ohioans.

I moved from Wisconsin, a choice I made in part because Ohio's teachers are better equipped for collective bargaining. I'm deeply concerned about the continued stripping of workers' rights in public institutions, and if this trend continues in Ohio, there will be significant furthering of brain drain in this state in the public higher institutions. This bill whittles away at bargaining protections for teachers' unions and is a farce of "protection". The bill both prohibits the ability for union negotiations to bargain about workload, while simultaneously requiring that workload policy be updated every 5 years.

It is clear to me that the developers of bill SB 1 have little experience with how working and teaching actually happens in higher education. Our faculty are already stretched thin on their responsibilities, including the tenure and promotion process. We barely have enough faculty to be able to continue this process, and yet, the bill proposes to add additional post-tenure review requirements that will exacerbate this review process, forcing faculty to put more time into reviewing one another instead of dedicating time, effort, and energy into teaching their students. The policies and processes outlined in this bill regarding bureaucratic processes will directly harm students' education.

Regarding the bill's DEI bans: if we, as a state and culture, must go so far as to remove the protections we have put in place to again prioritize white men in the hiring field, then white men must also admit that they are inadequate in a truly competitive job market. If this bill passes, their education will also suffer as they are challenged less and less to re-think and re-evaluate difficult topics, leading to a further weakened and uncritical, incompetent work force. I do not want to live in a state where the workforce are drones, silently carrying out the wills of bosses in ever more extreme ways.

The people of Ohio need their senators to take care of them in ways that have immediate effect. Put your efforts toward strengthening our food chains, protecting our environment, so we can actually have a place to live and food to eat. Take care of what people REALLY care about and need, ALL of your constituents, not just the few with deepest pockets.

This bill had robust opposition when it was proposed before. The fact that it has been so fast tracked to prevent your constituents proper time to be able to react to this blatant overreach of government

control in workplaces is telling, and labor across the board sees these actions. To pass this bill is a step against more than just teachers, but the very communities that make this state run, and make this state great.

I urge you to vote no on Senate Bill 1. For the sake of Ohioans in and outside of higher education.

Valerie Lines