

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

Thank you for reading this written testimony. I write this as a citizen and not as a representative of any institution. My name is Jacquelyn (Jackie) Arendt. I am a part-time faculty member at Cuyahoga Community College and Cleveland State University. I am also president of the North Royalton Board of Education, a current board member of Cuyahoga Valley Career Center (CVCC) and their immediate past president, and the 2021-2023 President of Ohio Parent Teacher Association.

As you can see, I know education at all levels, and I strongly oppose SB1 and its companion bill HB6. It does nothing to help students. It is a wolf in sheep clothing. It needs more time. Furthermore, I implore all of you to not force this bill to the Senate floor for a vote prematurely.

Education is paramount for success regardless of the pathway. Even career tech requires classroom learning. We live in an interconnected, rapidly changing world and the benefits of courses that foster empathy, critical thinking and cultural awareness cannot be overstated. Cutting "controversial" subjects does not make sense and is an open invitation to cut anything deemed unworthy without thoughtfulness.

I know protecting children sometimes means uncomfortable conditions as I am the mother of four grown daughters. I am proud that my girls, my husband and I are all products of public education. I also know the value of earning a degree that has been built across multiple discipline areas of knowledge and not just your core field.

My point is that those 'controversial' subjects are used in everyday life to understand the various people we encounter that are not in our traditional, homophilic groups. These courses support the principles of academic freedom and intellectual diversity by encouraging students to critically examine the structures that shape their lives and empower them to become agents of change with their communities and beyond. By eliminating these courses, we risk developing critical thinking skills. If you believe that indoctrination is at hand, you devalue young people and their personal growth toward social responsibility.

Furthermore, many of the changes within this bill are administrative which will cause confusion and may require additional bills to correct them. In my opinion, SB 1 is another SB29 from the last general assembly session. It has some good points but the fact that it is being ramrodded through committee to the floor for a vote and then to the house will cause you more work just like SB29 did. Please, I respectfully urge you to reconsider the quick vote. Evaluate this bill carefully and give it ample opportunity to be discussed and reviewed.

Please consider the various and numerous parts throughout the coming year BEFORE YOU go to vote. If you are not going to slow it down, please vote no and remove it from consideration. We need to allow conversations, not curtail them.

Finally, I encourage all committee members to attend a controversial class, say my Intro Soc class, and see and hear from students and faculty before you pass judgment.

Have a wonderful day,

Jackie Arendt

10133 Delsy Drive

North Royalton OH 44133

(440) 668-7136