

Testimony of Youkyung Bae, PhD
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 Youkyung Bae, and I am a faculty member at The Ohio State University. I do not represent The Ohio State University but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 1.

I write to express my strong opposition to SB 1 and the significant harm it would bring to higher education in Ohio. I am deeply concerned that this bill **undermines academic freedom** and restricts the ability of universities to fulfill their mission of fostering critical thinking, innovation, and leadership development.

SB 1 claims to support free speech, yet it does the opposite—it **limits open discourse, restricts faculty autonomy, and weakens the quality of education** for undergraduate and graduate students alike. If we want Ohio to remain a leader in education and economic growth, we must not allow politically motivated restrictions to dictate what can and cannot be taught in our classrooms. Universities are **drivers of progress**—this bill would **stifle intellectual inquiry and weaken our standing as a state that values education**.


I do not teach in a political field, but I recognize the **dangerous precedent** SB 1 sets for higher education. Academic freedom is not a partisan issue—it is fundamental to preparing students for the challenges of the real world. **This bill will do nothing to enhance education or the economy, but it will discourage the very innovation and leadership Ohio needs to thrive.**

By targeting DEI programs, SB 1 sends a clear message that Ohio does not value inclusivity, which will deter top faculty, students, and businesses from investing in our state. **Higher education should reflect the diverse perspectives and lived experiences of its students** – this bill is an unnecessary attack on that foundation.

Moreover, the fact that the authors of this bill are **limiting opportunities for public opposition** only underscores that they know Ohioans reject this biased and unnecessary overreach. I urge you to oppose SB 1 and stand up for the integrity of Ohio's public institutions.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



Youkyung Bae