

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Katharine Trostel. I am an English professor and the mother of two, young children who I am hoping to raise in a free and open Ohio. I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

This renewed attempt to push through "The Higher Education Destruction Act" over the serious objections of higher education stakeholders and in the face of massive public opposition demonstrates that state legislators are not listening to the people of Ohio.

SB 1 and HB 6 are the epitome of big government overreach. These bills would impose unprecedented levels of political interference and unnecessary micromanagement on Ohio's colleges and universities, severely undermining the integrity of our higher education system. This is why the bill faced strong bipartisan legislative opposition in the last session and failed to advance. This is not a partisan issue.

SB 1 and HB 6 legislate the manner in which certain topics can be addressed and the way in which professors manage their classrooms, creating a chilling effect on academic freedom and making it more difficult for Ohio's colleges and universities to attract and retain students and faculty. These bills also create an unprecedented number of unworkable and costly unfunded mandates, most of which are simply more burdensome versions of what our colleges and universities already do. SB 1 and HB 6 also attack workers' rights by attempting to prohibit fundamental collective bargaining subjects and the right to strike for faculty, who have every right to advocate for themselves and their students.

None of this advances higher education. Instead it distracts from real problems in higher education that we need to address: increased tuition and debt, student retention and completion, and drastic reductions in academic programs and full-time faculty positions.

Please support the integrity of our colleges and universities and the next generation of Ohio leaders. I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this destructive bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.