

Testimony of Barry Shank  
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 Barry Shank, and I am professor of Comparative Studies at the Ohio State University, where I have taught for almost twenty-five years. I do not represent OSU, rather I am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 1.

In its current form, the bill makes clear that its authors do not understand how universities work or how full-time faculty members are motivated to achieve excellence. While there are many instances in the bill that demonstrate these failures, I will restrict my comments to one specific point.

The best faculty are not motivated by fear but by the drive to improve the lives of our students via best educational practices and by the opinions and respect of our peers. We want to see our student succeed and we devote our lives to delivering the skills and knowledge bases that success requires. Our peers are distinguished participants in their field of study and fellow members of our departments. Workers in higher education are driven by the desire to discover and share knowledge, the value of which has been confirmed by experts in our fields. SB 1 seeks to instill an atmosphere of fear and intimidation in an effort to police the actions of the faculty. If the goal of the bill is to improve the quality of education, research, clinical practice and other standard expectations of faculty, it will fail to attain its goals. If the goal is to ensure that students benefit from an education that reflects the highest ideals and the most up-to-date findings of the relevant field of study, it will fail to attain its goals. SB 1 will do nothing to increase the quality of our work.

Yours sincerely,

Barry Shank