

Chairman, members of the committee, my name is Shelly Rea. I have spent years as a public school educator teaching and mentoring Ohio's young people. I am advocating today to oppose Senate Bill 1 because I am concerned it will lead to our best and brightest students leaving the state, weakening Ohio for generations to come.

Ohio has always been a place of possibilities. Our colleges and universities have produced leaders, innovators, and skilled professionals who have helped build our economy and community. We champion that our state has one of the highest number of college graduates in our country. This harmful bill undermines everything that makes our higher education systems strong. Senate Bill 1 sends a chilling message to students: Ohio is not a place for forward-thinking, innovation, and high-quality education. Why would any student choose restricted academic freedoms, no diversity and rigid oversight from politicians? They won't.

If we want Ohio to remain competitive, we must invest in our students and not drive them away. Other states will be happy to welcome them if we drive them out. And once those students leave, many won't come back. As has been said that Ohio's greatest export is people. This sad, shortsighted political maneuver will have catastrophic long-term consequences for our workforce, our economy, and our community. I urge you to oppose Senate Bill 1 and protect the future of higher education in Ohio and in turn, our state.

Respectfully submitted,
Shelly Rea