



**Opponent Testimony for Senate Bill 81
Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee**

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Dr. Christina Collins, Executive Director
Honesty for Ohio Education

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

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to testify today. My name is Dr. Christina Collins. I am the Executive Director of [Honesty for Ohio Education](#). I am also a proud parent of three children who attend Ohio public schools.

Honesty is a nonpartisan, statewide [coalition of 70+ organizations](#), and thousands of parents, teachers, students, and community members across Ohio that centers the [whole child framework](#) in our work.

This is why we stand in opposition to Senate Bill 1 and similar legislative attempts that compromise honest education. This bill is not only an affront to academic freedom but also a clear indication that this legislature is determined to ignore the voices of Ohioans, who already rejected these policies in the last General Assembly when Senate Bill 83 was defeated. Senate Bill 1, and bills like it do not make Ohio better. They are politically motivated efforts bent on dictating how and what tuition-paying adults learn, how and what faculty can teach, and how workers can advocate for safe and fair working and learning conditions.

According to The Chronicle of Higher Education,¹ 112 similar bills have been introduced in 29 states across the country. Thankfully, 68 of these bills have been tabled or rejected by states that value honest education and academic freedom.

Senate Bill 1 introduces a dangerous level of government overreach by dictating how universities manage faculty hiring, tenure, course content, and even public statements of commitment to academic freedom. It forces colleges and universities to police intellectual discourse, restricting open inquiry into so-called "controversial beliefs or policies." It mandates a flawed and misleading definition of "intellectual diversity," requiring ideological balance in ways that are both unrealistic and counterproductive to true education. It eliminates programs that have been instrumental in increasing access to higher education; from reducing barriers for marginalized students to creating more inclusive learning environment.

¹ Chronicle of Higher Education, "DEI Legislation Tracker." <https://bit.ly/41Av6S3>.

Furthermore, this bill threatens Ohio's ability to attract and retain both students and faculty, continuing a trend that could have devastating long-term consequences for our state's workforce and economy. We have already seen institutions in other states suffer when similar legislation was passed. Professors and researchers leave. Talented students look elsewhere. Employers struggle to find graduates with the skills necessary to thrive in a diverse, global workforce. Ohio cannot afford to follow this path. The defeat of Senate Bill 83 last year was an acknowledgment that these policies would harm—not help—our institutions.

We must ask ourselves: Who truly benefits from Senate Bill 1? It is not the students who want access to a world-class education. It is not the faculty who dedicate their lives to scholarship and teaching. It is not Ohio businesses that need a strong talent pipeline from our universities. The people of Ohio have already demonstrated their rejection of this attack on higher education, and I urge this committee to do the same today. Our coalition strongly opposes Senate Bill 1.

We ask you to vote no on Senate Bill 1, reject any attempt to fold this legislation into the state budget, and instead help us build an Ohio that we are ALL proud to call home.

Dr. Christina Collins