

Senate Bill 1
Testimony

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 Cynthia Collins, and I live in Milford, Ohio. I am a mother, military wife and grandmother. I am also a proud graduate of both the University of Cincinnati and Bowling Green State University. My oldest son has gone back to school and is now studying at Cincinnati State. My daughter is a graduate of Miami University who went on to earn a doctorate degree from the Ohio State University. My middle son is a proud graduate of the United States Military Academy. As can be seen, I am not unfamiliar with the diverse institutions of higher learning! As such, I am strongly opposed to SB 1 and its companion bill HB 6.

My love for this country and its democracy is strong. I was born on an army base in Germany as my father was deployed there in the early 60's. My husband spent 34 years in the army as both an active duty soldier and an officer in the Army Reserve, and during our marriage he was deployed overseas to Iraq and Africa three times. I have always believed that the strength of this nation lies in its spirit of independence, the ability and indeed mandate of its citizens to think independently and creatively in order to foster a culture of liberty! When an institution or individual restricts independent thought, it is in essence saying that people cannot decide for themselves, and so government must decide for the people. It is our spirit of independence and creativity which has allowed Americans to be leaders, innovators and critical thinkers in so many fields of study!

Ohio is known for its strong, independent institutions for higher learning; in fact, thousands of international and out of state students flock to this state each year to study in our colleges and universities! Weakening our institutions of higher learning by crushing them under the weight of government restrictions and mandates will not only damage the reputation of these schools, making them less desirable to the serious international or out of state student, but also cause many of Ohio's best and brightest to seek institutions where they can learn more freely elsewhere! Colleges and Universities must foster academic freedom, promote independent thought, encourage innovation and research, and allow students to pursue knowledge without external pressures to conform to specific agendas or political influence mandated by the state! Public institutions of higher learning should at all times give students the opportunity to develop a lifelong love of learning by fostering a sense of ownership over their learning, boosting motivation and confidence by enhancing critical thinking skills! Students must be given the freedom to be exposed to many different experiences and points of view! To do anything less is harmful to them, to our state and to our nation!

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this extremist, anti-American, destructive bill!

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. -Cynthia J Collins

