

February 10, 2025

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

My name is Jennifer Cunningham, and I am a Professor of English and the Writing Program Coordinator at Kent State University. I am writing to share my strong opposition to Senate Bill 1 (SB1).

Although the sponsors of SB1 claim it will encourage diversity, it would have the opposite effect. By restricting offices and scholarships that support particular groups, universities could no longer offer additional assistance to first-generation college students, like the students who take first-year writing and need additional support. Further, this bill would affect non-traditional students, historically underrepresented minorities, some nationalities, people with disabilities, and veterans. This would limit the commitment all our institutions should have to ensure all Ohioans have access to higher education.

SB1 also would undermine the collective bargaining rights of faculty unions by restoring the faculty strike ban for full-time faculty members from the original version of SB83 and prohibiting bargaining regarding faculty evaluations, tenure, and retrenchment. This ban on collective bargaining, combined with an overly broad definition of retrenchment, would leave faculty without job security, and would leave academic freedom unprotected. Both of these actions would weaken opportunities for teaching and learning in Ohio.

Further, SB 1 would jeopardize the retention and recruitment of quality faculty by eliminating meaningful tenure at Ohio's public institutions of higher education. This will result in faculty seeking positions with more job security—a trend currently occurring since the passage of similar laws in Florida. This loss of intellectual investment will weaken Ohio's academic and research capabilities, making it challenging to attract future faculty as well as impossible to attract and retain an educated and qualified workforce that results from graduating students.

Please consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful bill. Thank you for your consideration. Please represent and defend education in Ohio.

Sincerely,

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