

February 10, 2025

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

Thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony on this important issue. My name is Aaron Luebbe. I am a resident of Oxford, Ohio. I am also a Professor in the Department of Psychology at Miami University and the Director of Clinical Training for our Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology. I am writing as an individual and not as a representative of my employer, and **I am strongly opposed to Senate Bill 1 (SB1).**

SB1 is wrong for Ohioans for many reasons. The most important of these is that the fundamental overhaul of the higher education system will have significant negative ramifications for the economic outlook of Ohio. Governor DeWine and other leaders in Ohio have long lamented the “brain drain” that occurs in Ohio, whereby our best and brightest students leave Ohio for other educational and employment opportunities. SB1 will only hasten those departures as students (and professors) will flock to other states where they can receive appropriate education in an environment that is not hostile to higher education.

I am most concerned about the consequences of this bill for training the next generation of mental health practitioners in the state. Ohio is facing a mental health crisis, and Governor DeWine has been a champion for increased services in Ohio communities. In psychology, we have an ethical mandate to respect the rights and dignity of **all** individuals and to work towards justice by ensuring that all persons have access to and benefit from the contributions of psychology. Upholding this ethical mandate is required by the American Psychological Association which accredits our doctoral training program in psychology, and which requires discussions of how issues like age, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, veteran status, and cultural background affect someone’s mental health functioning. SB1 effectively nullifies our national accreditation. Without it, students will not attend our universities and, ultimately, Ohioans will suffer without sufficient mental health providers being trained.

I am the father of a child who is blessed by strong academic skills. If SB1 were passed into law, I would encourage her to attend college in another state. SB1 will limit Ohio’s public universities’ ability to hire innovative professors, and the quality of education will suffer greatly.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful bill. Governor DeWine recognizes the critical importance of improving our mental health workforce. Although it may not be visible immediately, ultimately Ohio families will not reach their full potential if SB1 limits our ability as educators to provide the next generation of mental health professionals with the strongest education possible. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Aaron Luebbe
Oxford, OH