

February 10, 2025

SB1 Written Testimony in Opposition

I urge all Ohio Senators to oppose Senate Bill 1 because it would gut the State's excellent higher education system.

We currently have two grandchildren enrolled in Ohio public universities, and a third, currently a high school senior, will start at one in fall. They're the future of our State, and I want them to have the best education possible, but that won't happen if SB1 passes. If it does, we'll lose the best faculty to other states, and the fine reputation of our universities will diminish as more and more part-time faculty—overworked and underpaid—shoulder the load.

Although I'm now retired, I taught American literature and a variety of other English courses at Xavier University in Cincinnati for 45 years. Along the way, I benefited greatly from interactions with colleagues at the University of Cincinnati and other Ohio public universities. I know how important tenure and academic freedom are to all of us. Hardly an excuse to slack off, tenure gives faculty the chance to speak from their own expertise about issues on and off campus without fear of reprisal. That's the responsibility of the public intellectual. And tenure usually brings additional administrative, mentoring, and other responsibilities.

Academic freedom to teach the material that faculty, based on their years of study, deem important for students is essential because in all fields—not just science—that material changes as new discoveries are made. The courses I taught in my later years were far different in both content and methodology from those I taught when I started. Teachers at all levels recognize this need to continue learning and evolving, or they won't meet the needs of an ever-changing student population.

I often laugh when I hear charges that faculty are indoctrinating students, who are, in reality, far less malleable than critics acknowledge, as any parent should know. If I had had that power over students, I would have made them read every page of every assignment, write clear, original, and well-organized essays, and turn every one of them in on time. Obviously, that didn't always happen even with very good students.

Ohio's public universities are a credit to the State. Please support them by voting against SB1.

Thank you,

John R. Getz

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