

Opponent Testimony for State Bill 1  
Senate Higher Education Committee  
February 11, 2025  
Amanda Groh

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 Amanda Groh, and I am a native-born Ohioan from Dayton and a current resident of Cincinnati. I attended Chaminade-Julienne Catholic High School in Dayton, and received my Bachelor of Arts degree from Hillsdale College in Michigan. I come from a family of public educators and employees of Ohio Universities: my mother and aunt were public school teachers (my mother in Miamisburg Public Schools, and my aunt in Toledo Public Schools), my uncle was a public elementary school principal in Genoa, Ohio, my cousin is a current employee of Bowling Green State University, my sister-in-law a former employee of Wright State University, and my brother is a current employee of Wright State University.

Throughout my education, I have been taught that it's important to learn HOW to think, not to be taught WHAT to think. Even at the politically conservative college I attended, the professors presented factual information, and taught us how to evaluate the information we were taught and to glean truth from it. The College had a conservative political worldview, but my education there was a factual and unbiased one. The professors did not avoid subjects that didn't agree with the College's conservative worldview. They presented the facts and gave us the tools to understand them.

SB1 attempts to restrict what Ohio students may learn if a subject is deemed "controversial." Controversial beliefs are defined in the bill as "any belief or policy that is the subject of political controversy, including issues such as climate policies, immigration policy, marriage, or abortion," presumably to avoid teaching a political worldview in the higher education system. But that definition is itself based on a political worldview.

Whether one likes them or not, objective facts and truths do exist, unburdened by the weight of political discourse. One might not like the fact that data gathered by climate scientists shows that there is a climate crisis, but that does not change the evidence that one is happening. One might not like learning that slavery and Jim Crow happened or that redlining and segregation have kept groups of people from achieving their full freedom and potential in our society, but that is our history.

Coupled with the restriction on teaching "controversial" topics, the call in SB1 to ban Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs will not only unfairly disadvantage those who have historically been barred from higher education opportunities, but it will also deprive all students at Ohio's colleges and universities of the ability to attend classes and interact with others who do not think, pray, or look like them. Diverse education and experiences benefit all students, and DEI training and policies help ensure that Ohio's public universities can provide that advantage to their students.

I believe that students in Ohio's public universities deserve the right to receive a factual, complete education and be given the tools to question ideas, seek out answers, and draw conclusions from the facts they are presented. I believe that SB 1 will harm Ohio's higher education system by lowering the quality of higher education and reducing Ohio universities' ability to provide a diverse and factual education to students in our state.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.