

Opponent Testimony for Ohio Senate Bill 1

Higher Education Committee

February 9, 2025

Shannon Harris

Kristina Roegner and Members of the Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Shannon Harris (she/her). I am a resident of Westlake, OH and a former graduate of Bowling Green State University. I am here to vehemently oppose Ohio Senate Bill 1 in its entirety.

As a graduate of a state university in Ohio, I highly value the quality of education I was able to get and believe should be available to students in the future. My education was in sociology and psychology and my career field has been in social work so I have worked with people from all walks of life. My education taught me all about diversity and the need for inclusivity, things I highly value, and things that would be directly jeopardized by the passage of this bill. Professors teach critical-thinking by posing thought-provoking ideas and narratives on controversial topics that are relative to our current society and lives. This bill cripples professors and universities from doing so. This will negatively impact the quality of education of the students and drive away the highest quality educators.

This bill will devalue the quality of education at state universities and thus how degrees from these universities are perceived by employers throughout the state. For many students, obtaining a college degree is only plausible at a state university, if at all. We cannot afford to derail the abilities of these institutions from providing the best education possible. And we cannot afford to take away efforts to support diversity at these universities.

I am asking that you please consider my testimony and vote against Ohio State Bill 1. I think it is critical to the health of our universities, the ability of our educators to thrive, and thus the quality of education that can be received.

Thank you for your consideration. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.