

Testimony of Prof. Michael Wilkins, CAPT USN (Retired)
Before the Senate Higher Education Committee
Senator Kristina Roegner, Chair
February 10, 2025

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingram, and Members of the Higher Education Committee:

My name is Michael Wilkins and I am a professor of mathematics at Cuyahoga Community College, where I have taught for two decades. I do not represent Cuyahoga Community College, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 1 (SB 1).

While I appreciate the effort put into the writing of SB1, it completely undermines Ohio's educational system at all levels. This bill completely ignores what it means to be a member of higher education by attempting to remove core educational concepts in and out of the classroom whether it be the contents in my/our course syllabi, requiring the rationale of why I/we are qualified to teach a course, removing our right to strike, and it only identifies China as the sole nation we need to be cautious with in dealing with them. What content I/we include is our concern, not the state's as I/we are professionals that know what is best for our students. Institutional human resource departments and faculty hiring panels identify our qualifications to teach departmental and institutional courses. The National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) protects the right of employees to engage in concerted activities, including strikes, for collective bargaining or mutual aid. There are many Nations, not just China, that we as Ohio citizens should be judicious about when dealing with them.

As a retired naval officer, I spent 30 years defending the U.S. Constitution and all of its intrinsic values, guaranteeing multiple liberties to our citizens and those who sought out refuge in the United States. SB 1 smacks of the many "isms" I and millions of other citizens of our great nation fought against for decades - Communism, Socialism, Nazism, Fascism, and Jihadism. These regimes limit(ed) and mandate(d) what their citizens could read, write, or speak of; we cannot let these practices permeate Ohio's post-secondary institutions. We need to allow our students and citizens to learn about and experience multiple views of our society and then form their own educated and informed opinions to be more productive citizens and make Ohio great again.

SB 1 is dangerous and it is more about establishing political goals and ideology than it is about educating Ohio's citizens and students attending its institutions of higher learning to be informed citizens, problem solvers and individual thinkers. SB1 removes the value of shared governance between an institution's faculty, administration, and the communities it serves. Ohio's population is declining and the passage of SB 1 will not mitigate that decline, but rather contribute to it.

Respectfully,

Michael J. Wilkins

Michael Wilkins
CAPT USN (Retired)