

”Enact Advance Ohio Higher Education Act”

Senate Higher Education Committee

Monday, February 10, 2025

Lori I. Kidd, PhD, RN Associate Professor, School of Nursing, College of Health and Human Services, The University of Akron

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Professor Lori Kidd, RN.

I have been a professor at The University of Akron for almost 27 years. It is from the perspectives of my professions as teacher and nurse that I am testifying in opposition to SB1. I would ultimately request the entire bill be withdrawn; however, I will focus on several sections that cause me major concern.

As a nurse, I know that healthcare clients need professionals equipped with current knowledge of scientific advancements grounded in facts and evidence, not opinion or belief. We train future nurses to become advocates for the vulnerable of society with documented health disparities related to race, gender, poverty, geographic location, mental and physical disabilities, etc. Academic freedom requires open discourse about such disparities, even if occasionally politically controversial or socially contentious.

I also oppose proposals of SB1 to create unnecessary evaluation and monitoring of faculty, adding time and expense to annual evaluations already being completed, threats to strip away so many protections as to effectively eliminate tenure, and further limitations of collective bargaining such as banning the fundamental right of labor to strike. I judge the foundational claim for this provision that university instructors align with safety workers such as hospital staff, law enforcement or first responders as spurious at best. Further, I request removal of broad and vague definitions of “retrenchment,” “fiscal pressure” or “emergencies” in terms so loose that they could easily be weaponized to terminate faculty and/or programs of study.

There are shortages of registered nurses in my community in northeast Ohio and the average nurse is 43+ years of age. SB1 contains multiple needless provisions that will further weaken the foundation of education in our state, having already lost ground in national education rankings in recent years. SB1 will not attract qualified teachers, students, or businesses to the state. It will not grow our intellectual capital, our economy, and it certainly will not make us healthier. I respectfully ask for your No vote on Senate Bill 1.

Chair Roegner and honored members of the Committee, I thank you for your careful consideration of my concerns in opposition to SB1, and for your time. I’m happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Lori I. Kidd

Lori I. Kidd, PhD, RN

Associate Professor, School of Nursing, College of Health and Human Sciences

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