

Opponent Testimony on Senate Bill 1 (SB 1)
Ohio Senate Workforce & Higher Education Committee
Jawhara Qutiefan

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is [Your Name], and I am here to strongly oppose Senate Bill 1. I am in my last semester of my bachelor's degree in psychology at The Ohio State University, where I have thrived as a student, a critical thinker, and a future professional. I am also a mother of four Ohioans, one of whom is in the 96th percentile in math statewide. I care deeply about the future of education in Ohio, not just for myself but for my children and every student who deserves a high-quality education rooted in academic freedom and open discourse.

At Ohio State, I have flourished the most in classrooms where open dialogue is not just allowed but encouraged. The ability of my professors to teach without fear or government control has given me the confidence to challenge ideas, defend my beliefs, and grow into a better thinker, a better professional, and most importantly, a better mother. The discussions I have engaged in—especially with professors and peers whose views I do not always share—have shaped me into a more informed and open-minded individual. These experiences have strengthened my commitment to family values because I have learned how to listen, reflect, and engage in meaningful conversations, qualities that are essential in raising children who will become responsible, thoughtful citizens.

SB 1 threatens this learning environment. It seeks to control what professors can say, forcing institutions into so-called "neutrality," which in reality is nothing more than state-imposed censorship. Education should never be about silencing discussion or limiting perspectives; it should be about fostering critical thinking, intellectual curiosity, and respectful debate. If this bill passes, Ohio's universities will no longer be places of learning but places of fear—where educators are forced to self-censor and students are deprived of the rigorous, open discussions that prepare them for the real world.

As a parent, I want my children to grow up in an Ohio that values free thought, independent learning, and strong moral principles—not one that dictates what can and cannot be discussed in a classroom. SB 1 will weaken Ohio's higher education system, diminish our students' preparedness for an evolving workforce, and ultimately lower the standards of education for future generations.

I urge this committee to reject SB 1. Do not let government overreach silence our educators, restrict our students, and weaken the very institutions that make Ohio strong.

Protect academic freedom, protect open dialogue, and most importantly, protect the right of every student to learn in an environment free from political interference.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions.