

Testimony of Kristen Robinson Hoskinson, PhD  
Before the Senate Higher Education Committee  
Senator Kristina Roegner, Chair  
February 9, 2025

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

My name is Kristen Hoskinson, and I am an Associate Professor of Pediatrics at The Ohio State University and Principal Investigator of a research lab at Nationwide Children's Hospital. I have a PhD in clinical psychology and am a licensed pediatric neuropsychologist (Ohio #7211). I do not represent Ohio State or Nationwide Children's Hospital in submitting this testimony, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Senate Bill 1.

I am writing to object to the radical SB1 that is currently being rammed through the Ohio Senate. This bill does nothing to improve the state of higher education in the great state of Ohio, but rather weakens our ability to educate the next generation of leaders, scholars, researchers, and professionals.

SB 1 stands in opposition to academic freedom AND teaching and supporting the growth of undergraduate and graduate students. If we want Ohio to continue to be a state that educates leaders of tomorrow, we must not place politically motivated restrictions on public higher education. Universities add significantly to the growth of Ohio and are a strong example of learning and achievement. Contrary to the discussions of those pushing this harmful bill, SB 1 RESTRICTS free speech and academic freedom. It minimizes critical thinking and will do nothing to enhance our future economy of thinkers and doers in Ohio. To be clear, I conduct research in a "non-political" field – my work involves studying how traumatic brain injury and pediatric cancer impact brain development in children and adolescents. That said, I recognize the harm this over-reaching bill will have on the climate of higher education, our ability to recruit the best faculty and attract the most promising students. I urge Ohio legislatures to stand against this unpopular bill. Ohioans are not interested in this biased and politically motivated plan. While not perfect, I support the following amendments that have been offered:

Revise language on "intellectual diversity" to clarify that faculty fully maintain academic freedom and are not forced to teach ideas about which there is no consensus within their academic discipline.

Modify the American civic literacy course section to allow instructors to have control of the curriculum, as is required for accreditation.

Delete the broad definition of "retrenchment," which as written would grant administrators unlimited authority to shut down academic programs and layoff faculty at whim.

To address concerns about unfunded mandates and administrative micro-managing, the proposed amendments would: Modify the faculty evaluation section to allow boards of trustees to maintain or modify current evaluation systems that are already in place.

Remove the section on degree program elimination, which contains arbitrary metrics, and replace it with a proposal to study the issue.

Eliminate language banning programs and services for underrepresented students.

Allow universities to post general syllabi online for public information instead of overly detailed syllabi.

To address concerns about workers' rights, the proposed amendments would: Eliminate language that prohibits faculty from negotiating over fundamental collective bargaining subjects and removes their right to strike over unfair treatment.

Remove the section on post-tenure review that allows for tenured faculty to be terminated at any time without due process.

Let us actually strengthen the great institutions of higher learning we have in the State of Ohio. Faculty are here to support learning and growth of the next generation of learners. Demonizing the work they do is not only unhelpful – it is harmful – and goes against the tenets of higher education in general.

I submit this testimony in opposition to this harmful bill. I urge moderate and thoughtful action to move Ohio forward – not backward.

Respectfully submitted,

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