

Testimony of Deborah Lyons, Ph.D.
Rep. Tom Young, Chair
May 16, 2023

Chair Young, Ranking Member Miller, and Members of the Higher Education Committee:

My name is Deborah Lyons and I am a professor of Classics at Miami University, where I have taught for 19 years. I do not represent Miami University, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Substitute House Bill 151.

I write in opposition to HB 151

If enacted into law, this bill will cause incalculable damage to the quality of higher education, and as a result, to the economy of the state of Ohio.

By infringing freedom of speech and academic freedom in Ohio's universities, this law will make our institutions of higher learning unattractive to both potential students and faculty. Ohio's students will be moved to seek their education out of state and students from other states will not choose to study here. The loss of students will be disastrous for the universities and the communities around them and will hasten the brain drain which is already a problem for Ohio.

The compromise of academic freedom and the addition of burdensome conditions of employment will make it extremely difficult to attract highly qualified applicants for teaching positions. This will further diminish the competitiveness of our universities and ultimately if our state.

The law seems based on an assumption that the universities are incapable of setting and maintaining high standards of academic excellence and integrity without interference from the legislature. It also assumes that the universities are hotbeds of radical indoctrination. If this were true, they would not be as highly regarded as they now are. This bill is an insult to the many dedicated teachers and scholars now employed in Ohio. The punitive nature of the provisions is a true slap in the face to those who have chosen to pursue this profession and to educate the youth of Ohio.

I urge you to vote NO on HB 151.