

Ohio Senate Bill 1 (SB 1): Ohio's Higher Education **DESTRUCTION** Act



What is SB 1?

SB 1 is a highly intrusive attempt by the Ohio legislature to increase government control over public higher education in the state. Specifically, SB 1:

- **Bans DEI in higher ed:** SB 1 prohibits all diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) scholarships, programs, offices, and positions. **As enforcement, the bill includes a mandate for policing and reporting if any of those activities continue.**
- **Curtails student voice in governance:** SB 1 removes the ability of student board members to vote. **It shifts power away from students and instead gives it to people who have no knowledge of what actually goes on in our classrooms.**
- **Suppresses instructional speech:** SB 1 introduces explicit but vague categories of “controversial” topics—“climate policies, electoral politics, foreign policy, diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, immigration policy, marriage, or abortion”—and limits faculty and staff voices about those topics. **It censors honest, inclusive education and critical thinking.**
- **Encourages punishment of faculty and staff:** SB 1 requires colleges and universities to respond to any student, student group, or faculty member who claims mishandling of “controversial” and other topics. It also makes “bias” reporting a prominent part of faculty evaluations. These mechanisms would ease the process for disciplining and terminating employees.
- **Guts academic freedom:** SB 1 supposedly aims to enforce “intellectual diversity,” and it purports to allow for “faculty professional judgment” on this issue. **But SB 1’s definition of “intellectual diversity” is so ambiguous, contradictory, and confusing that faculty would tread carefully on their own expert areas of research and teaching.** Their jobs would be degraded; so would students’ education.
- **Institutes threatening and costly performance review of faculty:** SB 1 obligates a faculty post-tenure review that supplants universities’ existing practices. Additionally, all annual faculty reviews would be guided by leading questions from the Ohio Department of Higher Education’s chancellor. Like complaint mechanisms, these redundant, unnecessary review processes would make faculty more punishable and fireable.
- **Allows tenured faculty to be fired at any time, without due process:** Through its mandated surveillance, review, and disciplinary responses, SB 1 would effectively end tenure in Ohio. **This change would have profound effects on the state’s ability to attract and keep faculty.**
- **Busts unions and severely limits collective bargaining:** SB 1 prohibits faculty unions from bargaining over fundamental employment rights—workload, performance review, and job security—and **bans the right to strike.** SB 1 also prohibits faculty negotiation about “retrenchment,” the shutting down of whole academic units and programs.
- **Facilitates doxing and harassment of faculty by the public:** SB 1 requires that all syllabi be searchable on colleges’ public websites, within three clicks of the homepage. At universities, syllabi must also list each instructor’s name and qualifications in addition to their course topics and readings. **This requirement would make it easy for anyone to troll an instructor and even to threaten their job.** This is especially true for untenured faculty and for those from marginalized groups and/or those teaching supposedly “controversial” topics.



What's lost if "academic freedom" gets taken away? How does this loss affect our university and our students?

- If faculty are forced to suppress their knowledge and to steer clear from complex issues, **students will be deprived of academic rigor, intellectual challenge, and principled debate**. Ironically, SB 1 creates the lack of intellectual diversity it claims to correct. Every university has an obligation to defend evidenced knowledge—not debunked theories and uninformed opinions. The overall quality of research and teaching in Ohio, and at Ohio State, would sink if this bill becomes law. **The state's public universities and colleges will decline in reputation**; top-notch scholars will look elsewhere for employment; and students will be less civically prepared and less competitive in the workforce.



What are faculty and students saying about SB 1?

- **They're saying a lot!** At the opponent hearing on February 11, 2025, there were nearly 1,000 submitted testimonies against SB 1. **This is an astonishing number—by far a record at the Ohio Statehouse, on any legislation**. About 200 opponents appeared in person to testify. Testimonies included faculty, students, concerned citizens, and community organizations. People spoke from many places of expertise—from medicine, law, and social work to engineering, history, and the arts. **Not a single current public university student in the state testified in support of the bill**, while hundreds of students (including Ohio State's own Undergraduate Student Government leaders) have opposed it. This is, in short, an overwhelmingly unpopular bill.



What can you do?

- Join AAUP-Ohio State to organize and help fight this destructive bill!**
- Follow or subscribe to groups like [Honesty for Ohio Education](#) and [Ohio Student Association](#), who are working hard with us to protect quality education and fair workplaces in our state. **Stand in solidarity with fellow teachers, students, staff, alumni, parents, citizens, and union members.**
- Submit testimony (written or oral/in-person) when the Ohio House of Representatives holds hearings on the bill—**coming soon in March!**
- Call and write your representatives. Speak from your own experience; make your views known.
- Call and write Governor Mike DeWine. Pressure him to veto or make substantive changes to the bill.

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