

Kate Greer

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Testimony: HB 337

Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chair Scherer, Ranking Member Rogers and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer proponent testimony on House Bill 337, a bill to exempt college textbook purchases from sales tax.

My name is Kate Greer, and I have the incredible privilege of serving in the Undergraduate Student Government (or USG) at The Ohio State University as Director of Academic Affairs. As I have worked in this position, while working for a degree in History and German Language, I have come to understand the many important roles books and learning materials play in higher education, but I have also witnessed firsthand the stress that the costs of these resources inflicts on my fellow students and myself.

The average student at The Ohio State University spends approximately \$1,200 per year on textbooks and learning materials, an annual expense that falls on individuals in addition to their tuition, fees, room, and board expenses. According to the Student Public Interest Research Group, \$1,200 is also the national average amount spent on supplemental learning materials. While students often receive various forms of financial aid to help alleviate basic costs of university life, they typically pay for textbooks with money from their own pockets - an expenditure that leaves student struggling to afford day-to-day necessities - eating, laundry, and school supplies, to name a few.

USG at Ohio State strives to create the best possible environment for individuals attending our institution, and it is our understanding that high textbook prices are currently a major obstacle to students seeking a positive college experience. Last semester, USG

successfully composed and passed a resolution through Ohio State's University Senate that encouraged faculty to be mindful of textbook ordering deadlines, an action that would help our bookstore to provide students with more used books and books for rent; enacting this resolution is predicted to save students \$2.5 million in the upcoming years. We have also been working very closely with campus academic groups, such University Libraries, the Office of Distance Education and eLearning, the Office of Academic Affairs, and the Affordable Learning Exchange to provide students with new and innovative outlets through which they can obtain course texts. Some of these projects include constructing a vast textbook reserve at campus libraries with more than 1,000 available for students to borrow and allocating several multi-thousand-dollar grants to help professors provide students in their courses with less expensive or free books and learning materials.

At Ohio State, the administration, the faculty, and the students have collectively been working towards solutions to help elevate the increasingly-present stress of purchasing high-priced textbooks. It is an important undertaking for all of us. So much progress has been made in this area in the past few years at our school, and in order to keep that momentum going, we need your help. By exempting books for higher education from sales tax in the state of Ohio, the passage of House Bill 337 would save students approximately \$30 for every \$500 spent on textbooks. In this way, it would uphold Ohio's position as a national leader in learning practices that truly benefit all components of student life. It's a major step towards the goal we have worked and continue to work so hard for – to aid young people as they navigate paying the already monumental costs of pursuing higher education.

Thank you again for your time, and please remember to support House Bill 337.