



Don Jones & Bride Rose Sweeney
State Representatives

Chairman Keller, Vice-Chair Riedel, Ranking Member Ingraham and members of the Higher Education Committee, I thank you for allowing my colleague and I to offer sponsor testimony on HB 9.

After 23 years in the high school classroom I've had a huge amount of students who have gone to college. What is unfortunate from what I've witnessed and in today's society it seems to be becoming the norm for kids not to finish their degrees in four years. HB 9 addresses this issue in a few ways.

The first is that it will require the Dept. of Higher Education to set up a general education course transfer system. This will allow students to transfer their general education course credits from one public university to another, thus staying on track even if they have to change schools because let's face it- life happens and students shouldn't be penalized for what is probably a very hard decision in the first place.

The second provision addresses an issue that happens at the end of some students' college careers. Sometimes a student may have one or two more courses to take, but they are not offered or the class is already full. What HB 9 does is makes it so that the student is able to pay for that class then, but may take it when it is available. The student would not have to pay any additional fees or have any extra per-credit hour charges.

With being one of the most recent college graduates of this General Assembly I have experienced students being left behind, hindered, and unable to enter into the workforce because of issues we control. That's why I think this third part of HB 9 is so important.

It will require all institutions of higher education every two years to audit their student records to identify students who have not been enrolled at the university for four or more semesters and who have not completed a bachelor's degree. Once these students been identified, the university will see if the courses those students have completed are eligible for an associate's degree. If the student is eligible for an associate's degree, the university must inform that student. Sometimes life happens and plans change, but this will benefit students by allowing them to take that associate's degree and enter the workforce with a great job rather than having wasted time and money in school. The universities will also report their review findings to the chancellor of higher education.

With these provisions HB 9 is going to be a great asset in our continual drive to make Ohio a business friendly state where we have a great, accessible, smart workforce.

Chairman Keller, Vice-Chair Riedel, Ranking Member Ingraham and members of the Higher Education Committee we ask for your favorable support of HB 9, and will now entertain any questions you may have. Thank you.