

Thank you Speaker Householder and all other members of the Ohio House If Representatives for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Bailey Regan, and I am a student at The Ohio State University. On behalf of thousands of other Young Americans for Liberty student activists, I am urging you to support Senate Bill 40. As a student involved in Young Americans for Liberty, or YAL, I have beliefs that are deeply important to me and my friends on campus regarding the ability to express our civil liberties on campus. With that said, it is our First Amendment right to be allowed to communicate ideas that we are passionate about with other members of the student body. The beauty of free speech is that even though we as students might disagree, our First Amendment protects the right to the diversity of thought. We have the right to voice these beliefs.

Unfortunately, colleges have enacted rules that make it difficult, if not impossible to exercise our right to free speech. Some have policies that make us register something as simple as handing out Constitutions or pamphlets in advance with the according campus department. This makes it impossible to take action quickly if needed, or in the worst case scenarios, administrators have the power to deny permission entirely if they deem their actions appropriate. In other circumstances, our activism will be confined to a “free speech zone,” a smaller area of campus where we must go if we wish to express our First Amendment rights. However, on public campuses especially, the entire campus should be open to free speech.

If students violate the rules, our events can and will be shut down by administrators or campus police, and we risk facing punitive measures. These regulations have a perturbed effect on free speech on campus, and discourage other students from standing up for their beliefs. During my time as a YAL student, I’ve been able to consistently witness these actions.

Colleges put these restrictions in place and justify them by saying that they are trying to protect us. If students, adults, need to be coddled and protected by college bureaucrats then they don’t belong in college. College is supposed to be a place where we go to encounter new ideas and think critically; we can’t do this if colleges are restricting unpopular or unique ideas.

Administrators keep unconstitutional rules in place because it’s easy when one doesn’t – face any consequences for stifling our right to free speech. Despite YAL members meeting with administrators, and despite free speech petitions with support from hundreds of students, these

restrictions on free speech still exist. Nothing will result in change unless colleges and universities who proactively authorize these rules throughout Ohio face consequences for violating the Constitution.

Which is why Senate Bill 40 legislation is so important. I and the thousands of other YAL students strongly urge you to support and pass this bill to protect students' first amendment rights on campus.

Again, thank you all and please stay safe and healthy.