

My name is Josh Hlavaty from Jeromesville, OH in Ashland County. I am a junior enrolled in Ashland University majoring in Political Economy through the Ashbrook Scholar program. I serve as Executive Vice President for AU's Student Senate and I am also a member of the Men's Basketball team.

The leading importance of Senate Bill 40 in my eyes is the positive impact it will have on education which is why I am speaking in favor of SB40. Being able express an idea in a respectful and peaceful way on campus has allowed me to hear opinions I never would have heard on my campus. Ashland is somewhat different from other campuses because of the existence of the Ashbrook Center and the vibe that is projected because of it. As an Ashbrook Scholar I am given opportunities and generally encouraged to express opinions about a number of political issues that are deemed taboo by many. This leads to open conversations with my fellow students and I am given an otherwise rare opportunity to hear from the other sides of major policy issues. The environment provided by the Ashbrook Center also impacts the rest of campus as well, because its understood that an extreme level of free speech is expected at Ashland University as a whole.

All this to say that many Universities in Ohio do not share similar environments that I am blessed to have at AU. Although there may not be an institutional policy that comes to mind that expressly restricts free speech on other Ohio campuses, there is still fear of suppression from many students. I have talked to friends from Ohio State, Akron, Kent State and may others that have expressed concern about expressing any idea that administration might not approve of on personal levels not because of university policy.

Senate Bill 40 would clarify for every student in Ohio to know exactly what their school's policy on speech is. Which not only creates for more ideas to be expressed and tested on campus and allows for a better relationship between the University the student population. All this being said, I ask that you would vote in favor of the proposed legislation.