

Ohio House Bill 310 Testimony

Chairman Jones, Vice-Chair Manchester, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee thank you for allowing me this opportunity to testify concerning House Bill 310 Enacting the Anti-Bullying and Hazing Act. My name is Elias Smith and I am the Chief Policy Officer for Wright State University's Student Government Association. As Chief Policy Officer, it is my job to work with legislators at the local, state and national levels to advocate for the Students of Wright State University.

Wright State University's Student Government Association is a proponent of House Bill 310. According to the University of Dayton, approximately 1.5 million high school students are hazed each year and 47% of students come to college already having experienced hazing. Additionally of the 95% of cases where students identified their experience as hazing, they did not report the events to campus officials.¹ And as seen in the proposed edits of the Ohio Revised Code of House Bill 310, the term Hazing is further expanded upon and holds the perpetrator of Hazing to a harsher degree of punishment.

According to Hazing Prevention, one study has shown that 71% of those who are hazed suffer from negative consequences such as but not limited to the following: Physical, emotional, and/or mental instability, sleep deprivation, loss of sense of control and empowerment, relationships with friends, significant others, and family suffer, loss of respect for and interest in being part of the organization, and erosion of trust within the group members.² All of these negative consequences, negatively impact students education often times resulting in a decline in grades and coursework.

¹ Cite: <https://udayton.edu/studev/leadership/involvement/student-life/hazing/statistics.php>

² Cite: <https://hazingprevention.org/home/hazing/hazing-and-its-consequences/>

Ohio House Bill 310 Testimony

While Wright State University currently doesn't have a hazing problem, Wright State Student Government Association, in partnership with our fraternity and sorority community, hosts an annual hazing prevention week of programming to educate our students on the risks of hazing.

Wright State University's Student Government Association is thankful that the Ohio House of Representatives has taken on this important issue. We thank Representative Dave Greenspan for introducing House Bill 310.

Once again, thank you for allowing me to testify here this evening, and I'd be happy to take any questions at this time.