

Proponent Testimony – House Bill 310

Judson Horras, North American Interfraternity Conference

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Chair Jones, Vice-Chair Manchester, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 310.

The Anti-Hazing Coalition (AHC) is a collaboration of the National Panhellenic Conference, the North American Interfraternity Conference and parents whose children were tragically killed by acts of hazing. The AHC is working to eradicate hazing through aggressive student educational outreach, new state-level efforts to strengthen criminal and civil penalties for hazing and federal advocacy to use transparency to make lasting cultural change in student organizations and on university campuses. Every student has the right to learn and thrive in a safe and healthy campus environment.

Parents include Rich and Maille Braham, parents of Marquise Braham who died at Penn State Altoona; Sylvia and Shawn Cumberland, parents of Nicky Cumberland who died at the University of Texas; Deb Debrick, mother of Dalton Debrick who died at Texas Tech; Stephen and Rae Ann Gruver, parents of Max Gruver who died at LSU; Lianne and Brian Kowiak, parents of Harrison Kowiak who died at Lenoir-Rhyne; Jim and Evelyn Piazza, parents of Tim Piazza who died at Penn State; and the Wiant Family who lost Collin Wiant at Ohio University in the fall of 2018.

A model for state hazing laws was developed in collaboration with the parents, the prosecuting attorney for the Penn State case and National Fraternity and Sorority leaders. Elements of the attached model are incorporated into new laws passed in Texas, Louisiana and Florida.

While the model contains many very important provisions, the top priority is making hazing a felony if serious bodily injury occurs. Please note, the definition of serious bodily injury must include forcing students to consume alcohol to a dangerous level (regardless of long-term physical damages). The very common element of death in recent hazing cases involves the over consumption of alcohol and/or drugs.

Other important provisions include providing students amnesty for calling 911 to seek medical assistance. In most cases involving the death of a student, other students delayed calling for help for fear of getting in trouble and it is firmly believed that calling for help immediately would have saved the student's life.

Thank you for the opportunity to present before you today. I would be happy to take any questions from the committee.

Judson Horras

President and CEO

North American Interfraternity Conference

865 W Carmel Drive Ste 116 | Carmel IN 46032 | 513.255.2287 Mobile