

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12, 2019**

**SUBMITTED BY:
WESTERN GOVERNORS UNIVERSITY**

Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Burke, and members of the Senate Finance committee, my name is Rebecca Watts, and I serve as Chancellor of WGU Ohio.

On behalf of the more than 3,000 Ohioans who attend Western Governors University, I come to you today with gratitude for the amendments made by the Ohio Senate to Substitute House Bill HB 166. By preserving the ability of WGU Ohio to maintain its certificate of authorization, you have protected the need-based aid and scholarships of Ohioans who choose an alternative education path.

WGU Ohio educates students from each of Ohio's 88 counties, 77 percent of whom both work and attend college full-time. They do so to build their skills and knowledge, and to advance their career pathways. This allows them to strengthen the future for their families, their communities, and all of Ohio.

The need-based aid and scholarships available to students as a result of WGU Ohio's certificate of authorization are often critical to making a college degree affordable to a student population with an average age of 36. Especially when combined with tuition-assistance provided by many of WGU's partner employers, this aid helps fuel employment for key in-demand jobs within the state. WGU Ohio looks forward to the opportunity to continue to train and educate Ohioans who seek to better their circumstances or advance their career by learning the skills necessary to take the next step towards a better future.

Thank you for your time, for your commitment, and for your vision for Ohio's future. I welcome the opportunity to answer any questions you may have.

