



Representative Anthony DeVitis

House Bill 118

Education Committee

Sponsor Testimony – Representative Anthony DeVitis

Representative Bill Patmon

March 18, 2015

Chairman Hayes, Vice Chairman Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor and members of the House Education Committee thank you for the opportunity to bring House Bill 118 before you.

House Bill 118 will prohibit state institutions of higher education from charging overload fees to students enrolled in eighteen credit hours or less per semester. College graduates across Ohio and the nation are increasingly saddled with student loans and are struggling to pay off their debt. I believe it is time we do everything we can to assist those who want a degree, whether it is from a four-year university, two-year university, or technical school and that is why I stand before you with House Bill 118.

An overload fee is an increased tuition rate charged when students exceed the hours deemed a full course load. If students are taking eighteen credit hours or less of courses per semester, or the equivalency in quarters, House Bill 118 states that an overload fee shall not be charged. A full-time load is determined by each individual institution, although many define it at 16 hours.

At the time when Ohio needs to increase educational attainment of its citizens, the cost of a postsecondary education is growing. The average annual tuition and fees at Ohio's public two-year colleges exceeded the national average by \$788 (32.3%) and average annual tuitions and fees at public four-year colleges exceeded the national average by \$1365 (19.1%) (Source: Legislation Service Commission, Ohio Facts 2012 Edition).

Increased costs sometimes lead to increased student debt. In 2012, the average student debt for Ohio college graduates rose to \$29,037, ranking Ohio 9th in the country in amount of average student debt.

Students are faced with the burden of high tuition costs as it is, and they should not be charged with additional fees for taking on a greater work load. It is nearly impossible for a student to take 16 credit hours per semester and graduate on time, especially if they have a change in major or there's a course that's not offered in a particular semester and need that one extra class, and it bumps them over the top. It has become increasingly difficult for students to graduate on time; so many students attempt to take more classes per semester in order to do so. However, the additional fees tacked on are a large deterrent. House Bill 118 would eliminate that deterrent, allowing students to take up to take up to 18 credit hours per semester without paying extra.

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House Bill 118 has received strong bipartisan support; it is not a partisan issue, it is common sense. We need to do more for our students, and this bill is a step in the right direction.

Chairman Hayes, Vice Chairman Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor and members of the committee, once again, thank you for the opportunity to bring House Bill 118 before you and I would be happy to attempt to answer any questions the committee may have at this time.

