

**Ohio Senate
Finance – Higher Education Subcommittee
HB 64**

***Testimony of Nick Eichler
Student, Harrison College – Columbus
May 20, 2015***

Thank you, Chairman Gardner, Vice Chair Cafaro and members of the Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education. My name is Nick Eichler, and it is with great honor and a deep sense of self-accomplishment that I stand before you today as a proud student of Harrison College and a recipient of the Ohio College Opportunity Grant (OCOG.)

One of the most exciting, rewarding, and unique things about our society here in the US is that we don't have to know exactly what we want to be when we grow up at the age of 18. We don't have to follow the direction that our parents took, nor do we have to conform to the traditional means of furthering our education right out of high school.

I, myself, took the opportunity in my 20's to explore entrepreneurship, volunteer with numerous special needs programs, and even entertained the possibility of following a life dedicated to religious order. And though every opportunity was extremely rewarding and provided tremendous growth, none of them seemed to fulfill the passion that was planted in me for more.

At the age of 34, this non-traditional student darkened the doorway of Harrison College and my life changed forever. It was the eagerness of the staff, the dedication of the instructors, and the overwhelming sense that everyone believed in each other that made the decision to go back to school so easy for me. The environment at Harrison College made it possible for me to believe that I could achieve a degree. The environment at Harrison College also provided me with a sense of belonging that I may not have felt at other educational institutions. I am looking forward to graduating in December 2015 with my Associate's Degree in Applied Science, working as a Certified Medical Assistant, and going on to pursue my BSN as a Registered Nurse.

I believe in our system and in the power of the Subcommittee to continue to grant Ohioans the opportunity to better themselves through quality educational opportunities that are afforded by the Ohio College Opportunity Grant. I believe in myself and institutions like Harrison College to make the most of the grant funds provided to ensure educational experience that enhances the lives of those benefitting from them. I believe that together we will continue to build a strong foundation that fosters opportunity for Ohioans to continue to make this great state even greater. Simply put, I believe in you, I believe in me, I believe in us!

Thank you for your time and consideration. It is with great admiration for each of you that I will happily entertain any questions that you may have.