

**Ohio House of Representatives
Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education**

HB 49

***Testimony of ,
Student, Daymar College, Columbus
March 15, 2017***

Good afternoon, Chairman Perales and members of the Committee. My name is Erika Lewis, and I'm a full-time student at the Columbus campus of Daymar College. I'm currently in my third quarter at Daymar, and have made the President's list. I'm taking this time to ask you to continue funding the Ohio College Opportunity Grant so that I can earn my degree and make a better life for myself and my family.

I enrolled at Daymar to study business management, and I will have an associate's degree when I graduate in November 2017. I have always wanted to own my own business. I will use my degree to open an affordable 24-hour daycare. I will hire employees that are responsible, dependable, caring and loving. Daycares with flexible hours and high-quality employees are hard to find, especially in urban neighborhoods.

Daymar's business courses will give me the education I need to take the first step toward business ownership and give me the tools needed to have a promising future. My classes fit perfectly into my busy life, which is what makes it possible for me, as a working student and full-time mother, to attend college and earn a degree.

In many ways, my peers and I are quite similar, as far as juggling work and parenting with a full college schedule. I'm currently employed at Turkey Hill Market, where I work in the QSR department; this is a small diner where I prepare food for customers. I work about 32 hours a week. My wages support my two children, who are 14 and 8 years old.

I faced many challenges to go to college. I have 13 sisters and brothers. I'm in the middle, and I was raised by my grandmother. I tried college when I was younger, but had a lot going on. Now I'm back in college, and this is what I want to do with my life. I have found in life that if you want something, you're going to go for it.

I'm glad that the Ohio College Opportunity Grant was available to help me put my best foot forward and go for it. Since I first enrolled at Daymar, I have received \$704 in OCOG. I have also taken out loans to pay for my education. When you know you have the cost of tuition

covered, you can overcome different things in life that come up to interfere. Even a relatively small amount of OCOG helps you stay in school, so you can get your degree.

Without OCOG, I would have had to put my dreams off. Now I can make them happen. Not just for me, but OCOG helps a lot of people better their lives.

Please support the Ohio College Opportunity Grant for career college students. When you do, you will help us realize our life dreams. Thank you for listening. I'm happy to answer your questions.