

Testimony on House Bill 49  
Ohio House of Representatives Finance Committee' Subcommittee on Higher Education  
Representative Rick Perales, Chair

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Chair Perales, Ranking member Ramos, and Representatives Anielski, Antonio and Duffey, my name is Nathan Balasubramanian and I am a student at Wright State University. I also have the honor of serving as the Chief Policy Officer for Wright State Student Government Association and as the Vice Chair of Ohio Student Government Association (Government Affairs) which represents the students at all of the four-year public universities in the State of Ohio. Thank you for allowing me to appear before you today to give the Wright State students' perspective on the aspects of H.B 49 that pertain to higher education.

Wright State Student Government Association, herein referred to as SGA, is aware of the growing costs of higher education and recognizes the importance to reduce the burden of debt caused by access to education on all Ohioans. In the past, the State of Ohio has continuously looked into creative ways to lower the cost of education in Ohio. This SGA commends the efforts of this legislature for prioritizing the need to invest in the development of workforce for Ohio. I, on behalf of SGA, bring to you, two (2) major requests for this subcommittee to consider.

**Section 381.150 (B) - Textbook:**

With reference to SGA Senate Resolution 17-04 (copy attached) dated February 21st, 2017, I respectfully request this committee to remove H.B 49 Section 381.150 (B) and (D), which mandates the universities to provide text books out of the university budget and also charge students up to \$300 as textbook fee. SGA believes that, while the goal is to reduce the textbook costs for students it is more than likely to cause unintentional harm.

The total cost of the course material varies by number of enrolled credit hours, and the student's field of study. Therefore, applying a general fee of \$300/year to all full-time students may increase the financial burden for students who comparatively would spend less. Transferring the responsibility to provide textbooks for students to the university limits the student's ability to explore free market choices such as buying, renting, and sharing. Adding the financial burden to the operational budget of the university without a significant increase in State Share of Instruction will adversely impact the out of classroom experience for students as the university will be forced to reallocate the budget to accommodate the new mandate.

At Wright State, SGA has been proactively advocating for the faculty to own the responsibility of reducing the cost of textbooks. Recently, Wright State University Faculty Senate adopted a resolution to form a faculty committee to plan the strategy for reducing the cost of textbooks.

**Student Trustee Voting Rights:**

Joining Ohio Student Government Association's statement on student trustee voting rights, I, on behalf of SGA, respectfully request you to propose amendments to R.C 3337.01, 3339.01, 3341.02, 3343.02, 3343.06, 3344.01, 3350.10, 3352.01, 3356.01, 3359.01, 3361.01, 3362.01, and 3364.01 with the text as provided in H.B. 183 of 131st General Assembly.

Student Trustees are a valuable resource to the college campus administration. They provide meaningful insights to the Board of Trustees and also bridge the generation gap between the board members and students. Recognizing this, the State of Ohio granted student trustee voting rights to the Ohio State University through H.B. 64 of 131st Ohio General Assembly. Since, H.B 64 of 131st Ohio GA and the current H.B 49 of 132nd Ohio GA are isomorphic in nature, we ask that this subcommittee promote student self-governance by advocating for the grant of student trustee voting rights to all public universities in Ohio.

Chair Perales and members of this committee, I appreciate you all for taking the time to listen to me and thank you for the opportunity. I would welcome any questions you may have.