

Ohio House Bill 310 Testimony

Chairwoman Lehner, Vice-Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for allowing me this opportunity to testify concerning House Bill 310 Enacting the Anti-Bullying and Hazing Act. My name is Hannah Weisgerber, and it is my responsibility to work with legislators at the local, state, and national levels to advocate for Wright State University students' interests. On behalf of Wright State University's Student Government Association (SGA) as Chief Policy Officer, I sincerely hope to see HB 310 passed by the Senate.

According to a study conducted by Elizabeth J. Allan and Mary Madden, at least 55% of college students involved in clubs, teams, and organizations experience hazing in their college careers.¹ The study involved 11,482 post-secondary students. Considering that Wright State University currently has roughly 12,000 students in attendance, it is hypothetically possible that more than 6,000 students experience hazing on our campus. Although the university knows this to be untrue thanks to ongoing, comprehensive efforts to ensure that our institution is both inclusive and non-violent, we believe in the utmost protection of our students and faculty. HB 310 presents the protections that the SGA wants to see from our State Representatives. Throughout our students' duration at Wright State University, their safety, both on and off campus, is of utmost importance. While pursuing a post-secondary education, students and faculty have a right to be free from anxiety due to the disastrous consequences of hazing, bullying, and violence.

According to Hazing Prevention, one study has shown that 71% of those who are hazed suffer from negative consequences such as, but not limited to, the following: physical, emotional, and/or mental instability, sleep deprivation, loss of one's sense of control and empowerment, loss of relationships with friends, significant others, and family, loss of respect for and interest in

¹ Cite: https://www.stophazing.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/hazing_in_view_web1.pdf

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being part of the organization, and erosion of trust within the group members.² HB 310 provides protections from the consequences of hazing for students and faculty while also making certain that the proper penalties are in place for violators. It will encourage the sharing of evidence-based, best practices to combat hazing and bullying. Not to mention, the bill provides that violators will only be penalized in a way that will best ensure their reintegration to the school (when appropriate). With university-wide protections like our Anti-Hazing Policy and our annual hazing prevention week, SGA hopes to see protections against hazing encouraged from the State when they vote on HB 310.

Wright State University's Student Government Association is thankful that the Ohio Senate has taken on this important issue. We thank Representative Dave Greenspan for introducing House Bill 310.

² Cite: <https://hazingprevention.org/home/hazing/hazing-and-its-consequences/>