



Testimony before the Senate Finance Committee

Substitute House Bill 166 – FY 2020-21 Budget Bill

Wednesday, June 12th, 2019

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Burke, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Ohio Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am Tom Walsh, Vice President of the Ohio Association of Community Colleges (OACC), which represents the presidents and trustees of all twenty-three of the state's public community colleges.

On behalf of Ohio's community colleges, I want to thank you for doubling the proposed increase in the State Share of Instruction to 2% for FY 2020. As with any budget, we understand that difficult decisions must be made and we are grateful that the Senate has elected to provide this additional investment in our institutions. For community colleges, this 1% increase will provide an additional \$4.6 million each year of the biennium on top of what Governor DeWine and the Ohio House have already supported.

After experiencing no increases in SSI funding levels since FY 17, we believe that the investments in HB 166 are a recognition that the student success reforms that our colleges have embraced are working. Since adopting a 100% performance-based funding model, Ohio's community colleges have seen an 8.5% increase in the number of degrees and one-year certificates that have been awarded, along with a 22% increase in short-term certificate awards. It is hard work, but our colleges are committed to closing the skills gap and we believe that investing in student success is a winning strategy.

In addition to the 3% increase in SSI over the next two years, OACC would also like to thank you for the clarifying language on the annual \$5 per credit hour tuition caps for community colleges. Allowing a limited tuition cap generates additional resources for our colleges to continue implementation of the student success reforms such as career counseling and academic advising aimed at helping more students complete and move successfully into their new careers.

Chairman Dolan and members of the Senate Finance Committee, once again, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of these provisions that will provide new resources to our community colleges and help more Ohioans advance to their future career. We thank you for your ongoing support of the role that our colleges play in helping more Ohioans earn an affordable degree as we work to provide the technical and skilled workforce for our state. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.