



Ohio Conference of the American Association of University Professors

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Testimony of Martin Kich, Ph.D.
Ohio Conference of the American Association of University Professors
Before the House Commerce and Labor Committee
Representative Dick Stein, Chair
October 6, 2021

Chair Stein, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and Members of the Commerce and Labor Committee:

My name is Martin Kich. I am a professor at Wright State University and President of the Ohio Conference of the American Association of University Professors (OCAAUP), which represents over 6,000 college and university faculty across the state.

I submit this testimony to express my association's opposition to House Bill 435 and the restrictions that it would impose on public and private institutions of higher education -- restrictions that would limit the autonomy of our colleges and universities to make their own decisions about vaccination requirements and disclosures for members of campus communities.

We believe that our institutions of higher education have done well to manage the interests of stakeholders and develop campus health policies as we continue to confront the pandemic. All of the institutional policies of which we are aware have exemptions for students, faculty, and staff. Very simply, HB 435 is unnecessary and seemingly serves only to diminish efforts that encourage COVID-19 vaccinations.

Unfortunately, public health has become deeply politicized in the name of freedom. Freedom does not mean the right to jeopardize the health, safety, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All rights carry related responsibilities, and in this case, individual freedom must take into account the good -- the health -- of the whole community.

As faculty, we trust the scientific process and firmly believe in the expertise of trained professionals, including scientists, immunologists, physicians, and public health experts. The vast majority of these experts support vaccinations, and we should trust their guidance. The legislature should refrain from undermining efforts that promote the health of our campus communities -- the efforts that make in-person learning safer and possible once again.

Thank you for your time and consideration.