



MIAMI UNIVERSITY

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BEFORE THE SENATE WORKFORCE & HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

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CHAIR

TESTIMONY
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Chair Johnson, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Minority Member Williams and members of the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in opposition to Senate Bill 135, specifically Section 3333.051. We suggest that there are more efficient options when considering expanding nursing education in Ohio. First and foremost, nurses are critical to the delivery of high-quality patient care and needed health care services in the State of Ohio. Nurses have to be well-trained as there are often instances where a nurse does not have the luxury of a do over. In order to attain the high quality of care necessary to be provided by nurses any program must meet the following three requirements:

First, a nursing program needs high quality Nurse Faculty. Currently, Ohio has a critical Nurse Faculty Shortage. Creating more programs and student “seats” would create more faculty vacancies, contributing to an already difficult situation for existing nursing programs across the State of Ohio.

One of the biggest challenges facing Ohio and our nation is the recruitment of nursing faculty. Creating new Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) programs will compound that obstacle for all existing nursing programs in Ohio. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing identified the most critical issue related to nursing faculty recruitment as noncompetitive salaries. BSN programs also require graduate and doctoral-level faculty. It is unclear how community colleges will be able to effectively recruit and retain qualified faculty while also delivering a program at reduced cost. Creating new BSN programs in Ohio will require an increase in the demand for nursing faculty and will stretch the already limited supply of faculty for existing programs in the State of Ohio.

Second, every nursing student needs a clinical placement and a clinical instructor to oversee their respective nursing clinical. Ohio does not currently have enough experienced nurses willing to supervise nursing students in their hospital clinicals. These clinical instructors (and clinical preceptors) have to monitor every single thing that a nursing student does during their clinical. There is already a bottleneck of providing existing BSN students with required clinical experiences due to the fact that partnering hospitals have a limited capacity of clinical placements and qualified clinical instructors. Forty-seven Associate Degree in Nursing programs are currently listed on the Ohio Board of Nursing’s program list. Forty-nine more BSN programs are listed by the Ohio Board of Nursing. All of these programs across the state, 96 in total, are competing for clinical sites and clinical instructors.

Third, it costs considerable dollars to run a BSN program. Expanding BSN programs to community colleges may not be the most efficient use of limited State funds. The expansion of BSN programs creates a duplication of services arguably at the expense of diluting existing nursing programs. The limited State funds would be better served by strategically expanding current BSN programs. For example, the Southwest region of the state already has eight existing nursing programs including Miami University offering a BSN program: Kettering, Wright State, Good Samaritan, Christ Hospital, Mt. St. Joseph, University of Cincinnati, and Xavier.

The cost of creating and maintaining a high-quality BSN program is substantial and there are many resources which are crucial to a BSN education. Qualified faculty at competitive salaries is just one example. Educating students about evidence-based practice requires library resources with adequate access to current evidence in the field and guidance on how to evaluate and interpret this information. Miami and other four-year institutions have these resources in place, including doctoral librarian staff dedicated to guiding students in individual

courses and in 1:1 consultation. In addition to the nursing expertise and the library resources that are crucial to BSN education, baccalaureate programs require high-quality education from experts in the social sciences, ethics, policy, and management. Miami and other universities provide a broad, foundational education, allowing nursing students to benefit from non-nursing courses, as well. Miami's baccalaureate foundation is exceptional, is already integrated into our nursing program, and requires no additional investment.

The State of Ohio has invested in four-year institution BSN programs providing the resources necessary to deliver BSN content to both students who choose a four-year degree and for students who begin at a community college and then complete their degree at a four-year institution. There has been and continues to be capacity to absorb community college registered nurse (RN) students in existing RN to BSN programs. This progression requires no additional investment from the state and provides multiple opportunities for students to complete a four-year degree with an Ohio program from wherever they live. Interestingly enough, these programs have historically low-demand, and therefore do not signal a need to expand to additional four-year programs. In fact, an Ohio Board of Nursing Survey demonstrated that of the Associate Degree RNs in the workforce, over half were not interested in obtaining a BSN. The primary reasons for this disinterest was an individual's stage in career and life, and satisfaction with their current role. As such, it is unclear if the students who currently enroll in community college programs would have an interest in a four-year program. But it is certain that expanding four-year programs will increase the demand for highly qualified faculty both in the classroom and hospital settings.

Actually, due to the fact that community colleges can provide the RN experience at a quality and price point lower than Miami can provide, the continuing trend of decreased community demand, and the oversaturation in the availability of RN to BSN programs, Miami University has opted to phase out its RN to BSN program, effective May 2021. Miami University has a long history of delivering high quality nursing programs which contribute to Ohio's goal of a robust, high-quality nursing workforce. Miami University will continue to offer the BSN degrees on both the Oxford campus and Hamilton campuses. The Oxford campus offers a market-based tuition; while, our Hamilton campus offers the program at a significantly reduced cost, with students paying an average of \$6,565 in tuition each year and over three quarters receiving financial aid.

The creation of four-year BSN degrees at community colleges would require an additional investment in the Baccalaureate portion of those programs. We know that the expertise in Baccalaureate foundations makes a difference in patient outcomes. Four-year programs in community colleges will also require significant investment in liberal arts foundations if these programs are going to realize the same positive patient outcomes associated with a BSN degree.

In summary, we agree that the State of Ohio needs additional qualified nursing graduates. We believe that this can be done in a more cost-effective way by developing existing BSN degrees with colleges and universities which are already accredited and have the faculty resources available to offer these degrees.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, for the opportunity to speak in opposition to Senate Bill 135.