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Chair Edwards, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Troy, and esteemed Members of the House Finance Committee, I extend my sincere gratitude for this opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 606, the Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students (CAMPUS) Act. This bipartisan legislation will protect the freedoms enshrined in the First Amendment while ensuring that all students live and learn in an environment free from harassment, discrimination, and hate.

House Bill 606 is a comprehensive effort to address the alarming rise in racial, religious, and ethnically charged acts of harassment and intimidation on our college campuses. This bill mandates that institutions of higher education adopt and enforce policies on racial, religious, and ethnic harassment and intimidation. These policies will include related training, complaint procedures, and the creation of an anti-hate task force, ensuring that our campuses are proactive in combating hate.

The need for this legislation is evident in recent events on college campuses across Ohio and the nation. Students should not have to live in fear of expressing their identities or beliefs. I believe we can protect the freedoms enshrined in the First Amendment while also making sure that all students live and learn in an environment free from harassment, discrimination, and hate. Through the CAMPUS Act, we ensure that colleges and universities have clear policies and robust mechanisms in place to address and prevent hate incidents.

To ensure transparency and accountability, the bill requires the establishment of a uniform reporting system on hate incidents at institutions of higher education. This system mandates annual reporting of all allegations and documented incidents of bias, harassment, and intimidation. These reports will be reviewed by the Chancellor, the Attorney General, and the United States Attorneys for the Northern and Southern Districts of Ohio, ensuring that no incident goes unnoticed or unaddressed.

The CAMPUS Act also emphasizes the importance of community and interfaith initiatives. The bill provides funding for the Campus Student Safety Grant Program, appropriating $1 million in FY 2025 to enhance security measures at on- and off-campus locations. Additionally, the Campus Community Grant Program, also supported by $1 million in FY 2025, will fund intergroup and interfaith outreach programs, fostering cultural competency and understanding among students. Furthermore, the Campus Security Support Program

allocates $2 million in FY 2025 to support student organizations affiliated with communities at risk for increased threats of violent crime, terror attacks, hate crimes, or harassment.

Our students need us to do more to address the rise in acts of hate and fear on campus. We must be clear: hate of any form is unacceptable. This bill is about transparency, accountability, and empowering students to foster trust and build bridges across differences. By requiring state agencies to adopt policies for the prevention of antisemitism and promoting a framework for discussions on prohibited conduct and safety measures, we are taking concrete steps toward a safer and more inclusive campus environment.

I want to thank Rep. Pizzulli, my colleagues in the Jewish Caucus, and the student voices we've been listening to on this matter for their support, perspectives, and leadership. Their input has been key to developing a bill that I am optimistic can bring forth positive change. Together, we owe it to our students to protect their freedoms while ensuring they live and learn in an environment free from harassment, discrimination, and hate.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.