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**Finance Subcommittee on Agriculture,
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HB 462 Sponsor Testimony: House Higher Education Committee

Chair Young, Vice-Chair Manning, Ranking Member Miller, and members of the House Higher Education Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 462, which would re-establish the Ohio Student Choice Grants Program that existed for approximately 20 years, but was eliminated in 2009 due to a state budget crunch.

What the program did, and would once again do, is provide uniform grants to all full-time undergraduate students from Ohio at a private, nonprofit university or college to narrow the tuition gap between public universities and colleges.

Under the program, an eligible private, nonprofit-enrolled Ohio student would receive a grant equaling 25% of the average per-pupil state subsidy (i.e. State Share of Instruction (SSI)) at public universities in the previous biennium. Based on average numbers, that 25% annual award per student would be \$1909 (calculated against the 2023 average state subsidy of \$7635).

I believe that this program made a lot of sense during its existence. It incentivizes an Ohio student to remain in Ohio, to attend an Ohio institution of higher education, and does so at ¼ of the cost to the state budget as compared to enrollment at a public state institution. It is estimated that this program would see student participation of approximately 50,000 individuals.

We have all expressed concern about “brain drain” from our state. I believe that this is one reasonable way to help reduce that situation. Mr. Chairman, and Committee members, I will now defer to my joint sponsor Representative Brennan to provide his testimony on this bill. Thank you for your attention and consideration.