



**Proponent Testimony of David M. Anderson, Ph.D. Senior
Advisor, Government Relations, The Washington Center Ohio
Senate Finance Committee
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Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee, it is a privilege to provide proponent testimony on behalf of The Washington Center.

My name is David Anderson. I am Senior Advisor for Government Relations at The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars. I take additional pride in working with the state legislature in Ohio. Although I am a native of New Jersey, my first job out of graduate school was a Visiting Assistant Professor position in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Cincinnati, where I taught ethics, political philosophy, and other courses for two years.

The Washington Center has partnered with the State of Ohio for over 20 years. Students from private and public colleges and universities receive state scholarships to participate in our workforce readiness program. We have enrolled over 2,100 students with state scholarships since the partnership began. The Washington Center is located in Washington, D.C. and was founded in 1975. We are the largest, independent, nonprofit experiential education organization in the United States. Nearing five decades, The Washington Center has ably adapted and evolved its experiential learning model, centering on access and opportunity for students.

The Washington Center has played a crucial role in helping students achieve career readiness by connecting motivated students with companies, organizations, congressional offices, and federal agencies that exemplify the values of leadership and community service. Nearly all students who participate in our internship program receive academic credit for their semester or summer term in Washington D.C., as we have cooperative agreements with several hundred colleges and universities throughout the United States. After our program, students return to their home states and become vibrant, contributing members of their state's economy.

The Washington Center's mission is to create flexible, immersive pathways to enhance the pipeline of diverse talent and build more equitable, inclusive workplaces and communities. The Center is the bridge between higher education and professional careers— leveraging all that D.C. has to offer in order to provide dynamic, experiential learning opportunities to empower and motivate young people to become engaged global citizens.

In our Academic Internship Program, students intern four days per week at one of the many private companies, nonprofit organizations, congressional offices, and federal agencies with whom we partner. The students also take an evening course one night per week and are afforded additional career-connected learning workshops to ensure they are prepared to enter the post-COVID professional workforce with the skills employer's desire.

When Ohio students come to Washington, they head back to Ohio with business capital, political capital, and civic capital. Our research and outcomes show that students who participate in-person, virtually, or in hybrid modes from Ohio have developed the knowledge, skills, and



connections that will assist in building their careers. It's a powerful model that works.

In Ohio, we are proud to have worked with over 30 schools throughout our decades-long partnership with the state. The public universities that have sent us students in the last ten years include: Bowling Green State University, University of Cincinnati, The Ohio State University, University of Toledo, Wright State University, and Youngstown State University.

The private colleges and universities that have sent us students in the last ten years include: Baldwin Wallace University, Capital University, Case Western Reserve University, Denison University, Hiram College, John Carroll University, Marietta College, Ohio Dominican University, Ohio Northern University, The University of Findlay, Tiffin University, University of Dayton, University of Mount Union, Walsh University, and Xavier University.

We are asking the state legislature for \$300,000 per year in the FY24-25 biennium budget for a total of \$600,000. This funding is used to administer scholarships to Ohio students who enroll in The Washington Center program. In the House version of HB 33, we were awarded the full \$300,000 per fiscal year. With a \$300,000 appropriation for each of the next two years, we expect up to 50-75 Ohio students to enroll each year. An increased appropriation would help expand the program to more Ohio students and give these students access to a wide network of internship opportunities.

Recently, we worked with the Department of Higher Education to get approval to increase the award amount for Ohio students to \$5,000 from \$2,300 (fall and spring) and \$4,000 (summer). Additionally, The Washington Center will initiate a \$1,000 matching scholarship to be awarded to students who receive the \$5,000 Ohio scholarship and who choose to reside in Washington Center-provided housing. Thus, in-residence students are receiving a total of \$6,000 of combined Ohio and TWC funds as of the current spring semester.

Additionally, students will have the flexibility to utilize scholarship funding to access The Washington Center's short-term programs, which afford students the opportunity to access TWC's career readiness and workforce development curriculum while immersing themselves in Washington, D.C., and interacting with students from around the country, without sacrificing an entire semester at their home school. This flexibility will open opportunities for more students to get the real-world experience that will help prepare them for their chosen career after college.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony to the Senate Finance Committee. We are proud of our relationship with the state of Ohio and Ohio's public and private colleges and universities. Thank you for your past support of The Washington Center and consideration of this appropriation request.