



**Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Ohio**  
**C. Todd Jones, President and General Counsel**  
**Senate Finance Committee**  
**June 25, 2024**

Thank you, Chairman Dolan and members of the Senate Finance Committee for allowing AICUO to submit written testimony on behalf of Ohio’s independent, nonprofit colleges and universities in support of Senate Bill (SB) 182.

AICUO represents 50 independent, non-profit colleges all over Ohio. Located in every region of the state, our membership includes research universities, traditional liberal arts colleges, comprehensive universities, single-purpose institutions, and religiously affiliated colleges.

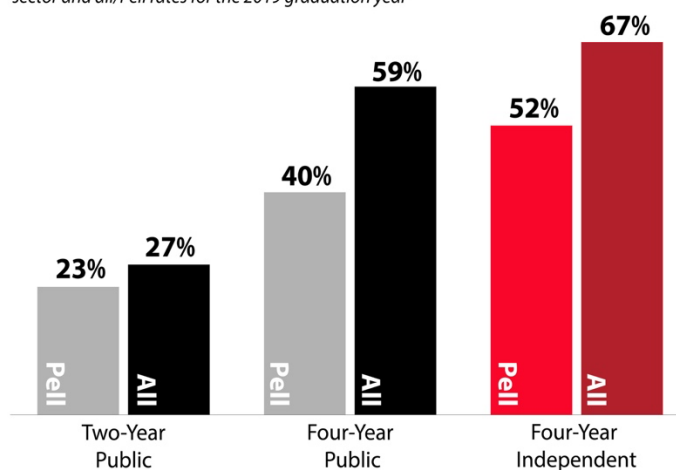
SB 182, introduced by Senator Reynolds, would help provide foster youth with access to quality higher education by awarding each qualifying student a foster-to-college scholarship based on the student’s financial need. Nationwide, less than five percent of youth raised in foster care graduate from a four-year college, and only two to six percent complete a degree from a two-year college ([National Foster Youth Institute](#)). SB 182 would add Ohio to the list of 35 other states that offer similar scholarships for foster youth to attend college.



**Who Graduates Ohio Pell Students Best? Independents**

Pell students are 30% more likely to graduate at independent institutions than at publics

*Ohio completion rates for degree programs by sector and all/Pell rates for the 2019 graduation year*



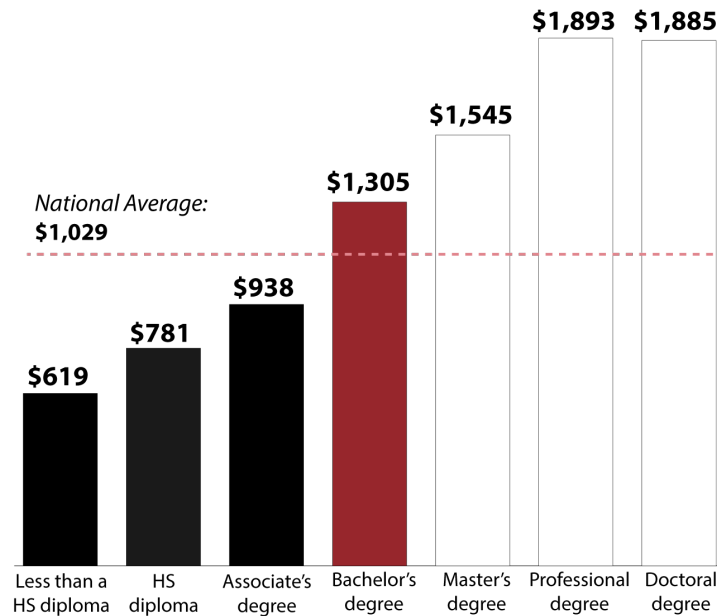
*Note: Completion after three years at two-year publics and six years at four-year public and independents  
Source: IPEDS (2019 Graduation Year)*

AICUO members have the capacity and desire to graduate as many current and future students as possible, which will bring more economic growth to Ohio and build the state’s workforce pipeline. There is no doubt that post-secondary attainment is necessary. Ohio needs more of everything:

more vocational training, more career tech, more credentials, more associate degrees, more baccalaureate graduates, and more post-doctoral degrees. Ohio lags on all fronts and in this global economy, just having a high school diploma will not cut it.

## Learn More, Earn More

Average weekly earnings in 2020 by educational attainment



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2020). *Education pays*.

Although AICUO is supportive of the legislation, we respectfully request the removal of postgraduate degrees from eligible programs under the scholarship. The inclusion of postgraduate degrees, meaning law school and medical school among others, is costly. Independent institutions are tuition-driven and receive no state funding like our public counterparts do. Including postsecondary degrees in the legislation could cause our members to choose not to participate in the program, which is obviously not what the sponsors would intend. In addition, including postgraduate degrees could result in fewer scholarships being awarded due to significantly higher costs associated with advanced degrees and limit the number of students who can benefit from the available scholarship funds.

SB 182 is crucial in empowering foster youth to break the cycle of limited opportunities and provide better support to them in their pursuit of higher education. This small investment – one AICUO wholeheartedly supports – will lead to better outcomes and a brighter future for foster students today and generations to come.

While our institutions do everything they can financially do to assist those students in need, AICUO applauds Senator Reynolds efforts to assist students that much more.