

# James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions

May 16, 2023

My name is Bradford Wilson. I am the Executive Director of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions in the Department of Politics at Princeton University, though I write to you on my own and not on behalf of Princeton University. I am writing this statement in support of the proposed Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society at Ohio University.

I can see from the legislation that this center would be extremely well-positioned to do at Ohio State much of what we have done at Princeton, and *go further* in a direction that would deeply benefit the university and the State of Ohio. Our students deserve more and better opportunities for civic education, for the exchange of civil discourse, and for the deep cultivation of the liberal arts: an education in and for liberty. The bill to establish the Chase Center is a well-advised and very welcome piece of legislation that would deliver these needed benefits to students.

Let me tell you a bit about our experience at Princeton.

The Madison Program promotes teaching and scholarship in constitutional law and political thought. Under the leadership of its director, Robert P. George, and with the guidance and support of an advisory board from the worlds of law, business, philanthropy and the academy, the Madison Program sponsors and guides research and teaching at the undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral levels.

The Madison Program is named for the Princeton graduate (and undergraduate student) who became the principal architect of the Constitution and the fourth President of the United States. The Program builds upon Princeton's traditional strengths in public law and jurisprudence and contributes to a tradition at Princeton of offering an important alternative to vocational legal studies and the forms of legal scholarship traditionally dominant in American law schools, such as the doctrinal analysis of case law.

Within the Madison Program, the Initiative on Politics and Statesmanship has the mission of understanding and evaluating the substance and style of statesmanship in modern democratic societies; of encouraging the study of statesmanship in the Anglo-American political tradition, as it was inherited from the Greek and Roman classical past, through the Glorious Revolution, the American Revolution, the Civil War and the World Wars, to the present; and of presenting the findings of leading scholars of this statesmanship in private seminars and public forums which will assist students and the general public in understanding and supporting examples of statesmanlike behavior in modern political environments.



Bradford P. Wilson, Executive Director

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*James Madison Program*  
in American Ideals and Institutions

The Madison Program also sponsors our Initiative on Freedom of Speech, Inquiry, and Expression that provides the University and the public with a full array of programs and courses that explore the nature, centrality, and importance of these freedoms to the mission of universities and to civic culture.

The Chase Center would be able to emulate but also to improve on what we've done at Princeton. For example, the Madison Program supports the Cambridge University Press series "The Political Writings of American Statesmen," of which I am a co-editor. The Chase Center could be the home of similar ventures at Ohio State.

The Madison Program has drawn visiting faculty from Harvard, Yale, Brown, Dartmouth, Amherst, the University of Notre Dame, Johns Hopkins, Georgetown, Duke University, Emory University, the University of Georgia, Baylor University, Oxford, Middlebury College, Hillsdale College, the University of Virginia, and the Catholic University of America, among others. The Chase Center could imitate and improve on our model and form itself into the most vital center of humanistic, cultural, and civic learning in the country.

Ohio State deserves a program like the Madison Program and even better. I believe the Chase Center would be well-positioned to do exactly that, and I would personally welcome the opportunity to volunteer my time in strengthening such an effort.

Sincerely,

*Bradford Wilson*

Bradford P. Wilson  
Executive Director

