

Dear Senators Cirino and McColley,

*RE: Opposition to S.B. No. 117 - Establishment of the Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society and the Institute of American Constitutional Thought and Leadership*

I am writing to express my strong opposition to S.B. No. 117, which seeks to establish the Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society at the Ohio State University and the Institute of American Constitutional Thought and Leadership at the University of Toledo. While I appreciate the intent to promote civic education and constitutional studies, I believe this bill is misguided and would divert resources away from urgent needs particularly within the University of Toledo College of Law.

As a student leader on campus, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges that students at the University of Toledo College of Law face. Our institution is in desperate need of resources to address critical issues such as improving infrastructure, enhancing academic programs, and providing financial aid opportunities to students. While the establishment of new institutions may be worthy of consideration in the future, it does not address the immediate concerns facing the majority of UT Law students.

Moreover, the University of Toledo already boasts exceptional constitutional law professors who provide students with a comprehensive education in this field. Students who choose to participate in activities such as mock trial or moot court receive valuable debate experience. Contrary to claims of a liberal bias on campus, I have observed that some of the most publicized events in recent years have come from the Federalist Society, who works hard to provide strong programming throughout the year, indicating a diverse range of perspectives being represented.

Instead of diverting resources to establish new entities, I urge you to focus on providing additional support to existing programs and initiatives at the University of Toledo College of Law. This could include increasing funding for scholarships, expanding legal clinics, and enhancing career development opportunities for students. By investing in these areas, we can better serve the needs of a broader student population and address the challenges they face in their legal education and careers.

I am proud of the strong student community that exists at the law center, as well as the discussions that are already fostered there. We have incredible future attorneys honing their craft during a very challenging time in their lives, and I would love to see what a bill could do if it focused not on branching out into a new venture that distracts from more critical, current issues, but on determining what the school's strengths are and working to amplify them to draw more students and lay a foundation to rebuild the school's waning reputation upon.

I respectfully request that you reconsider your support for S.B. No. 117 and prioritize the immediate needs of the University of Toledo College of Law. Your attention to these concerns will greatly benefit current and future students, ensuring that they receive a high-quality legal education and have the resources necessary to succeed in their professional endeavors.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I appreciate your dedication to serving the interests of our community and the state of Ohio. Should you require any further information or would like to discuss this issue further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Renee Hopper