



Majority Whip Nick Santucci
House Education Committee
Sponsor Testimony for House Bill 119
April 1, 2025

Chair Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and Members of the House Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 119, the GRAD Act.

For many high school graduates, a four-year university seems to be the clear next step after graduation. In 2023, 61% of high school graduates in the United States were enrolled in a college or university in October of the same year. The majority of those students chose to attend a four-year college or university.¹ However, as of December of 2024, half of the top 50 most in-demand jobs in Ohio did not require a formal degree from a four-year college or university.²

In my district, many in-demand jobs are in trades or manufacturing, areas that many students are not exposed to before they graduate and must decide whether to attend college or university. While attending a four-year college is an ideal path for some, each student has different abilities and interests. This legislation will allow students to be exposed to a wider variety of options through an exit orientation program at their school, where they will be able to learn about available jobs and apprenticeships, enlistment in military service, grants and loans for higher education, and some practical information such as local healthcare clinics. These programs will be available to 11th and 12th graders, and will require the involvement of local workforce development boards and JobsOhio to ensure that the program reflects the unique needs and opportunities of each local labor market. These exit orientation programs will essentially give students the tools they need to make an informed decision about the career they want to pursue and support them as they enter adulthood.

Chair Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and Members of the House Education Committee, thank you again for giving me the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 119. Representative Williams and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.

¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. "61.4 percent of recent high school graduates enrolled in college in October 2023." <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2024/61-4-percent-of-recent-high-school-graduates-enrolled-in-college-in-october-2023.htm#:~:text=FONT%20SIZE:%20PRINT:-,61.4%20percent%20of%20recent%20high%20school%20graduates%20enrolled%20in%20college,to%20the%20COVID%2D19%20pandemic.>

² Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation. "Ohio's Top Jobs List." <https://topjobs.ohio.gov/top-jobs-list/ohios-top-jobs-list>.