

Testimony on House Bill 62

April 28, 2025

Chair Fowler-Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and House Education Committee members, thank you for the opportunity to offer written testimony in opposition to House Bill 62. Columbus State is the largest provider of College Credit Plus in Ohio, serving more than 10,000 students per year, and we are concerned that the proposed legislation would create administrative and financial burdens that will reduce access to CCP for Ohio families.

College Credit Plus is a vital part of Ohio's education system, enabling high-school students to get a jump-start on their careers by earning college credit while they are simultaneously completing high-school requirements. This program is enormously popular, with Ohioans earning more than 450,000 college credit hours in 2022-23. We are grateful to Ohio's elected leaders for their continued commitment to CCP and its contributions to workforce development, economic opportunity and affordable college credentials.

The CCP program has grown steadily in large part due to the flexibility it offers to Ohio families. Students may take courses at their high schools, online or in person on college campuses, with offerings that have been developed to meet the educational and workforce needs identified by their local institutions. By changing the financial model that supports those offerings, HB62 may reduce the availability of those options.

For example, HB 62 would reduce payment rates for courses that are delivered online, which in some cases will make these courses financially unsustainable. High-quality courses in any teaching mode require qualified instructors, appropriate curriculum and the teaching tools (including technology) to deliver the content effectively.

Families across Ohio have appreciated the flexibility that online CCP courses have provided. For students who want to fully participate in their high-school activities, work-based learning or job shadowing opportunities, online CCP courses have provided a way to remain engaged with their high schools while successfully earning college credit. The flexibility for online access has been especially helpful in rural and smaller districts where it may not be feasible to offer multiple CCP courses in person. Online courses also expand access because they are more easily scaled to meet student demand, particularly in smaller schools. Often, more students want to participate in popular courses than a smaller school can support, so online course access has allowed more students to take advantage of CCP.

College Credit Plus courses are an increasingly important tool for students to prepare for in-demand careers by taking coursework that will lead to credentials of value. For students who

do not have access to a multitude of CCP course offerings at their schools, or for students who do not have accessible transportation to a college provider, online courses have offered them the chance to enroll in more specialized courses, particularly those in STEM fields. At Columbus State, for example, we are lifting up online CCP courses to provide access to in-demand career paths, like accounting, that may not have a critical mass from any one high school. Online courses can provide access statewide to students who would not otherwise have options for earning college credit in those fields. HB 62 would limit our ability to expand programs like that.

HB 62 would also add new financial arrangements for course materials that will create new challenges for delivering CCP courses. Columbus State is committed to using open educational resources (OERs) when they meet students' learning needs. However, not all courses have relevant OERs, and not all OERs meet the quality standards necessary to ensure students are achieving the learning objectives of the course (and meeting accreditation requirements). The lack of clarity about who determines what is a high-quality OER will distract from the goal of delivering CCP effectively to students, and this requirement also does not address technical burdens. For example, some district-issued computers, like Chromebooks, may have issues accessing web-based OERs because of restrictions at the K-12 level. With greater emphasis on OERs, it will be essential to ensure that all students can access the content consistently from their home environments, particularly in rural areas where broadband access can be limited.

The opportunities provided by CCP, in all modalities, have resulted in a value proposition that Ohio families have understood and have appreciated. This program has made college more accessible for thousands of Ohio's students. We are eager to keep working with our high school districts to improve the CCP program in ways that help Ohio students thrive. The proposals in this bill concern us because they would directly limit rather than expand access for Ohio's students and families.

Columbus State welcomes the continued evaluation of ways to improve College Credit Plus for Ohio families and for the participating partner institutions. We support the recommendation by the Ohio Association of Community Colleges for a thoughtful, comprehensive review of the CCP program that can address areas for improvement. We endorse the creation of a study committee to make recommendations before the adoption of changes to CCP that could have unintended consequences.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony.

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