



Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Ohio
Emily Tully, Executive Vice President of Operations and Government Relations
House Workforce and Higher Education Committee
May 6, 2025

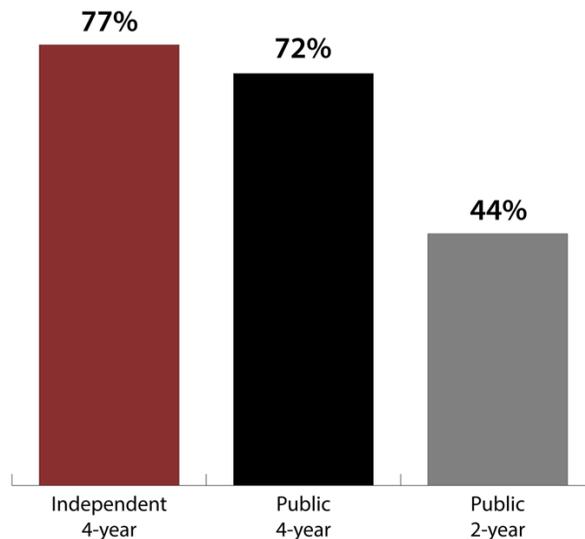
Thank you, Chairman Young and members of the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee, for allowing AICUO to submit written testimony in support of House Bill (HB) 25 on behalf of Ohio's independent, nonprofit colleges and universities.

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.

HB 25, introduced by Representatives Jarrells and Ray, 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). HB 25 would add Ohio to the list of 35 other states that offer similar scholarships for foster youth to attend college.

Ohio Independents Lead in Graduation Rates

Six-year completion rate for traditional-age students enrolled in the fall 2018 cohort by sector

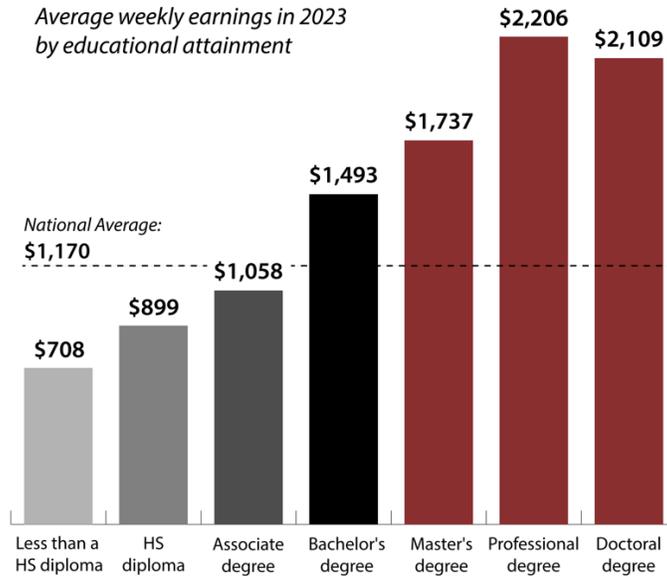


Source: *Yearly Progress and Completion*. (Dec. 4, 2024).
National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.



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



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey. (2023). *Education Pays*.

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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.

HB 25 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 to assist those students in need, AICUO applauds Representatives Jarrells and Ray’s efforts to assist students that much more.