



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) 95 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 95 would significantly strengthen Ohio's ability to recruit, retain, and support veteran and military-connected students across all sectors of higher education.

Ohio's independent colleges and universities, many of which are religiously affiliated and mission-driven, are deeply committed to serving all who seek a meaningful, values-based education. Accessibility is a cornerstone of that mission, and HB 95 supports that by expanding opportunities for veterans to choose the college that best aligns with their goals, beliefs, and needs.

HB 95 enhances the capacity of Veteran and Military Service Member Support offices at both public and independent colleges. It provides resources for student-led support roles, development of veteran-inclusive programming, and stronger employer engagement to assist in the transition to civilian careers. These investments will enable our institutions to better serve military-connected students and foster more inclusive, supportive campus environments. Fifteen of our member institutions are active members of the Ohio Veterans Education Council, demonstrating our sector's deep commitment to serving those who have served our country.

Ohio's independent colleges are proud to be a welcoming place to all service veterans. As the committee may know, Ohio was the first state in the nation to create the Collegiate Purple Star designation, which recognizes "those public and independent colleges and universities in Ohio that are supportive and inclusive of military-connected students." AICUO independent colleges are happy to be active participants in the program. Ohio's independent colleges also participate in the federal Yellow Ribbon program, a cost-matching program that covers the full cost of tuition and fees for longer-serving veterans, spouses, and their children through a combination of federal and institutional aid.

HB 95 builds on this existing support and affirms that all veterans, regardless of where they choose to study, deserve access to quality education and meaningful opportunities. By making these resources available to independent colleges, the bill ensures that service members are not limited in their educational choice.

AICUO applauds Representatives White and Stewart for championing this bill and advocating for veterans today and in the future. We respectfully urge your support of HB 95 as an investment not only in student success, but in Ohio's workforce, its communities, and its future.