

To: Ohio Workforce and Higher Education Committee  
From: James Rafeedie  
Re: House Bill 157  
Date: May 18, 2025

I am a proponent of HB 157 because it helps to address the negative impact of food insecurity among post-secondary students. Post-secondary students experiencing food insecurity are less likely to graduate and, as a result, have lower lifetime earnings than their counterparts who graduate. By addressing food insecurity, HB157 helps college students graduate, become better qualified for higher paying positions within Ohio employers, and less dependent upon government services.

More specifically, here is an excerpt from ["A Decade of College Student Hunger: What We Know and Where We Need to Go," Feb. 25, 2022, Hagedorn-Hatfield, Hood, and Hage.](#)

"College students seek degree attainment as a means to a better financial future, with many low-income students looking for an opportunity to break the poverty cycle. Higher education provides a path to better health and social outcomes as well. However, food insecurity impacts the chance of obtaining a degree (49). A recent study found food-insecure college students have 42% lower odds of graduating (50). These findings were pronounced for first-generation college students, with less than half who experienced food insecurity finishing their education (50). This decline in graduation rate may be attributed to poor academic performance, including lower ability to focus in the classroom, which is amplified among food-insecure students (16, 31). Research has shown in students of all ages that it's hard to learn when hungry (51, 52) and college students are no exception. Ultimately, food insecurity is a hurdle many at-risk college students are not able to overcome."

Respectfully,

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