



Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Ohio
Emily Tully, Executive Vice President of Operations and Government Relations
House Workforce and Higher Education Committee
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Thank you, Chairman Young and members of the House Workforce and Higher Education, for allowing AICUO to submit written testimony in support of House Bill (HB) 157 on behalf of Ohio's independent, non-profit 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.

Our member institutions recognize that food insecurity is a growing, and often invisible, challenge on college campuses. For many students, access to basic needs such as consistent, nutritious food directly influences their academic performance, retention, mental health, and overall success.

Our campuses are already taking significant steps to address food insecurity and create a safe, supportive environment for their students:

- At **Otterbein University**, students lead the *Promise House*, a community resource center and food pantry located on campus that directly serves their peers.
- **Baldwin Wallace University** students received a \$100,000 grant in 2021 to develop *The Campus Plate*, an app designed to help students locate available food on campus and see how far away sustainable food sources are from their current location.
- At **Christ College of Nursing** in Cincinnati, students have access to an on-campus food pantry and a dedicated fund that provides Kroger gift cards to help them manage food insecurity.
- The **University of Dayton** operates the Food4Flyers Pantry, which provides students with access to a variety of non-perishable and refrigerated food items. Students may select up to 10 items per week. The pantry is open multiple days during the academic year and offers adjusted hours over the summer to ensure continued accessibility.
- **Xavier University's** on-campus pantry, The Store, functions like a grocery outlet, allowing students to select up to ten fresh, frozen, nonperishable, hygiene, or household items at no cost. Four satellite locations ensure easy access for commuters, veterans, and off-campus students.

These are just a few examples of how Ohio's independent, nonprofit colleges are already taking a leading role in supporting today's students. HB 157 not only acknowledges the reality of student food insecurity but also empowers institutions to address it. Whether through campus food pantries, partnerships with local food banks, or streamlined access to public benefits, the tools made possible by this bill will help meet students where they are, with the support they need. House Bill 157 would strengthen and expand those efforts, helping to ensure that students can meet their basic needs and stay on track to graduation.

In closing, AICUO applauds Representative Brennan and Hoops for recognizing the vital connection between student well-being and academic success. We respectfully urge your support of House Bill 157 to ensure no student has to choose between food and their future.