



Ohio House of Representatives
Workforce and Higher Education Committee

Chairman Young, Vice Chair Ritter, and Ranking Member Piccolantonio, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of House Bill 157. My name is Stephanie Dodd, and I serve as Executive Director with the **Community Campus Coalition**, a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the civic purposes of higher education. For over 30 years, we have partnered with college and university presidents and campuses across Ohio to strengthen campus-community partnerships and promote civic learning.

We believe that institutions of higher education are a public good and that they play a vital role in strengthening communities across our state.

Since 2018, our organization has prioritized work to support students' basic needs—recognizing that non-academic challenges are often the greatest barriers to academic success. We partner with colleges and universities to develop **Student Resource Centers**, designated spaces on campus where students can access supports such as food assistance, housing resources, mental health referrals, and emergency aid. These centers are critical to ensuring that students succeed academically, are retained from one semester to the next, and ultimately earn a degree or credential.

Recent [data](#) from **The Hope Center** at Temple University found that **41% of college students nationwide experienced food insecurity in the past year**. On Ohio campuses we serve, food insecurity is consistently the most reported unmet basic need—and students facing food insecurity often struggle with multiple intersecting challenges.

We strongly support **House Bill 157**, which takes an important step in addressing food insecurity among college students. From our experience, meeting students' basic needs not only improves well-being but leads to measurable gains in **GPA, retention, and graduation rates**. These outcomes contribute directly to **Ohio's workforce development priorities** and long-term economic growth.

We are grateful for the Ohio House of Representative's attention to this issue, and we commend the sponsors of House Bill 157 for their leadership.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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