

Committees:

Arts, Athletics, & Tourism, **Ranking Member**
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Representative Dontavius L. Jarrells **Ohio House District 1**

Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Abdullahi, and members of the Workforce and Higher Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 511, legislation to increase appropriations for the Campus Student Safety Grant Program.

There isn't much to add to what my joint sponsor, Representative Pizzulli, has shared. I simply want to ground this bill in the moment we are living in.

Across the country, college campuses have become tense spaces. Students are reporting higher levels of harassment, intimidation, doxxing, and threats tied to global conflict and political division. Those tensions have reached Ohio. Campuses that once felt like open doors to ideas and belonging are now strained by fear, suspicion, and isolation.

The bill increases the appropriation for the Campus Student Safety Grant Program by ten million dollars in each of Fiscal Years 2026 and 2027, building on the one million dollars already appropriated per year under existing law. These grants give the Chancellor of Higher Education the ability to help institutions strengthen safety and security, prioritizing campuses facing increased threats of violent crime, terror attacks, hate crimes, or harassment toward students or student organizations.

That focus is deliberate. While harassment and hate have risen across the board, some communities carry a heavier burden. Jewish, Muslim, Black, LGBTQ+, and international students have found themselves singled out. Many are afraid to walk to class, attend student meetings, or even speak openly. When any student feels unsafe, the entire campus community is weakened.

These grants give institutions the flexibility to respond, improving physical security, emergency communication, prevention training, and crisis response. They help campuses restore what higher education is meant to be: a place where debate is welcomed, but harm is not.

College is supposed to be a place of discovery. Students leave home, often for the first time, trusting that they are entering a space built to challenge them, grow them, and prepare them. That only works when they feel safe enough to learn.

We are asking students to prepare for their futures at a time when many are unsure of their safety in the present. House Bill 511 gives our institutions the tools to meet that challenge.

It is responsible. It is timely. And it is necessary.

Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter, Ranking Member Abdullahi, and members of the Workforce and Higher Education Committee, thank you for your consideration of House Bill 511. We are happy to take any questions you may have.