

**Testimony for the Finance Committee, The Ohio State Senate**

May 30, 2025, 1:30 PM

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for considering this testimony. My name is Liam Faulkner; I am a clinical social worker and psychotherapist in private practice with extensive experience treating college students in conjunction with on-campus services. I am here to urge the committee to restore Section 381.130 from Governor DeWine's proposed budget as introduced.

This section would fund mental health services at Ohio's colleges and universities and continue to ensure much needed quality care for this essential Ohio population.

Throughout my clinical career, I have worked with students struggling to adjust to college life and the transition to adulthood; these students come from many backgrounds and their challenges cannot be predicted by racial or socioeconomically factors. I have witnessed firsthand the great and essential support campus mental health services provide in maintaining student well-being and connecting them with resources in the wider community, enabling them to remain at, and ultimately succeed in, school. Without access to safe mental health resources many of these students would have dropped out of university, depriving not only themselves of the benefits of a college education but the institution and state of their tuition fees. **College mental health services save colleges money not only via student retention but by reducing institutionalization and legal risk associated with self-harm on campus.**

Ohio's colleges and universities are world-renowned but that industry leading status is at risk unless we continue to support the students vital to the future of these organizations. Reducing funding for essential campus services will only serve to erode Ohio's attractiveness to potential students as well as our competitiveness on the national and global academic stages. Keeping our young people safe and healthy is one of the basic duties of any society; Ohio must not fail its students now.

I ask you to consider my testimony and restore the governor's proposed funding for mental health services at Ohio's colleges and universities. Thank you again for considering this testimony.

Sincerely

Liam Faulkner LISW