

Ohio Senate Finance Committee  
House Bill 96  
Interested Party Testimony  
June 5, 2025

Chairman Cirino, Vice-Chairman Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and esteemed members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony in support of The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine budget request.

The Ohio Pork Council is proud to represent approximately 2,500 members dedicated to advancing the Ohio pork industry and its products, while simultaneously raising awareness of the challenges our sector faces. The total economic output of the pork industry in Ohio stands at \$3.4 billion, which encompasses \$1.4 billion in value-added activity. This sector employs 28,175 individuals and contributes over \$115 million in state and local taxes. Our organization is committed to advocating for family farmers who prioritize animal health, food security, environmental stewardship, and economic vitality.

**Investment in Protecting Ohio**

Foremost among our requests is the full funding of a critical initiatives designed to enhance animal health and ensure public safety and economic resilience for Ohio agriculture.

We strongly advocate for the adequate funding of the “Protect OHIO” initiative at The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine, seeking the allocation be restored back to \$15 million per fiscal year. The state currently faces a shortage of large animal veterinarians, particularly in rural regions where their services are most needed. Given that Ohio’s agricultural sector exceeds \$125 billion, the presence of veterinarians is vital for maintaining animal health, which directly influences our food security and public health. The shortage of veterinarians, especially in rural areas, poses a significant threat to our agricultural infrastructure, increasing our vulnerability to potential outbreaks of animal diseases.

The College of Veterinary Medicine is poised to address this issue with a comprehensive plan focusing on enhancing veterinary infrastructure, improving disease prevention strategies, and expanding rural veterinary services. The proposed investment will support the expansion of the student body and facilitate the creation of an Emerging Animal Disease Center dedicated to proactive research and surveillance. This effort is crucial to safeguarding both Ohio's agricultural economy and public health.

In conclusion, these funding priorities represent critical steps toward safeguarding our agricultural future, enhancing food security, and promoting environmental sustainability in Ohio. We respectfully urge the General Assembly to prioritize this funding request to bolster the pork industry and protect the well-being of our communities.



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Thank you for your attention to these important matters.

*Cheryl Day*

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