

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Timken, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Maddie Andrews, and I am finishing my first year at Miami University. I am a political science major and a member of the Ohio Students Association. I have been following Ohio state politics closely, and as a student in higher education, the budget impacts me directly.

One thing that is very important to me is mental health care. I struggle with my mental health at times and have anxiety. In high school, I went to therapy for years to help deal with my anxiety and receive mental health support. It was so beneficial to me to discuss my experiences with another person and get the support that I needed. From therapy, I learned a number of different coping mechanisms that I utilize when I get super anxious or when I am having a bad mental health day. Many of my friends have or still do go to therapy and have had similar experiences. Mental health is so important, especially with a growing number of people in my generation dealing with mental health issues. Therapy and mental health support are important and life-changing. I feel strongly that all people should have access to these types of resources.

It's very important to me that the budget allocates money to mental health support. Many campuses have some sort of mental health care, but it is not enough. College is an exciting time for many students, but it can also be very stressful, and many students struggle with their mental health. Universities don't have enough staff to give students the support that they need, and it can take ages to even get an appointment with a therapist. The budget needs to set aside money to provide adequate mental health services to all students in higher education who are seeking it.

Another critical item the budget should support is local parks and libraries. I spend a lot of time at my local library working on homework and studying for upcoming exams. I find the library to be a safe and calming place for me to do my work, and I enjoy spending time there. I also utilize my local parks frequently. When I need a break from my studying, I go for a walk, run, or bike ride along the trails near my campus to clear my head and get fresh air. This is also a big help with my mental health. The budget must allocate money towards local parks and libraries for all community members to enjoy.

I ask you to consider my testimony and support higher education with this budget.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.