

**HOUSE FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
HOUSE BILL 64 TESTIMONY OF
Kirstyn Federer
Student, Otterbein University
April 15, 2015**

Chairman Smith, Vice Chairman Schuring, Ranking Member Driehaus, my name is Kirstyn Federer, and I am a senior at Otterbein University. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to discuss House Bill 64 today. In particular, I would like to discuss the Ohio College Opportunity Grant. OCOG provides support to Ohio's needs-based students to attend a public or private college or university in Ohio. I am from Hilliard, but currently reside in Worthington, Ohio. I am scheduled to graduate on May 3, 2015 with a bachelor's degree in Human Resources Management and a minor in business administration from Otterbein University. I pleased to share that I was able to complete my degree requirements in four years. I am hoping to obtain a job in Human Resources particularly in the health care industry soon after I graduate.

I am a recipient of the Ohio College Opportunity Grant, and I cannot show enough appreciation for your past support. This grant is very meaningful to students like me. I stand here before you today to ask for

your continued support of OCOG as well as request that you increase funding for this essential program.

When I found out in my senior year of high school that I would be attending Otterbein, I was beyond thrilled. All of my dreams of going to college were becoming a reality. Soon after I declared that I would be attending Otterbein, I started to think about how I was going to pay for school. Two of my other siblings were also going to be attending college at the same time, so my parents could not afford to help all of us. I quickly realized that I would have to pay for a good portion of my tuition on my own. I have currently worked at Kroger for the last eight years, and I knew that going into college, I would not be able to be a typical college student due to having to work on the weekends. As I began to establish a budget, I also realized that just working at Kroger was not going to be enough to pay for school. This meant that I would have to find other jobs, too. Since my freshman year at Otterbein, I have accepted two other positions on campus. I work in the university mailroom for seven hours each week, and I work as a campus tour guide leading an average of three campus tours per week. On the weekends and on some various weekdays, I work at Kroger. Of course, then on top

of all of that, I am a full time student taking sixteen credit hours. I am thrilled to have made it this far in college with the grades that I currently have, given my situation. I did however struggle my freshman year and considered moving to an easier and less expensive college such as Columbus State. After much thought, I realized that I could not do that. Otterbein was my home, and I belonged here. I love the feel of walking down the sidewalk and people saying “hello” without even knowing you. I love the way our professors offer their cell phone numbers and make themselves available for students anytime of the day. I cannot tell you how many professors’ offices I have cried in due to being in over my head with work and school. But what has kept me the most grounded is the knowledge that I have the support of everyone around me and that they are all cheering me on. I don’t belong at another university. Otterbein is my home. Otterbein is where I will graduate no matter what I have to do to make ends meet. Working three jobs through college has taught me a lot of lessons and has made me grow up faster than I wanted, yet it has made me into the individual I am today, and I am very thankful for that.

While I understand this body has recommend a \$5 million increase to OCOG, the entire \$5 million would be formulated to go to public universities, and independent students, like myself, would receive a cut in my OCOG funding.

I am requesting that OCOG funding be increased equally among sectors in this biennial budget to continue to help other students like me who, with some assistance, work very hard to achieve their lifelong goal of obtaining a college degree.

I will be happy to answers any questions you may have.