

Thank you members of this committee and Young Americans for Liberty for allowing me to speak today.

My name is Charles Heintel and I graduated this month from the University of Cincinnati. I urge you to support Senate Bill 40, the FORUM Act, because it will ensure that students' abilities to express and explore viewpoints is protected on the campuses of Ohio's public universities. It is a sad reality that a commonality shared by many Ohio students, and indeed students across the US, is the challenges they face in expressing their viewpoints from their own colleges. Thousands of Young Americans for Liberty student activists and I are counting on our state to pass the valuable protections included in this bill.

This is a bill to benefit all students. The bill in fact strikes restrictions concerning the Communist Party, a group Y A L has little agreement. But the concept of free speech is meaningless unless it protects controversial and unpopular ideas. At the University of Cincinnati, I have witnessed student groups face adversity from poorly designed free speech policies, especially those concerning written materials. This allowed campus political leaders to express to me and a university administrator at a university sponsored forum that they are okay with students removing legitimately posted materials if the students removing them simply don't like them. Rather, they believe the burden to rectify the disagreement should fall on the group whose posters were wantonly removed.

There is an all too pervasive idea on college campuses that students should be able to shut down ideas they don't enjoy hearing. At UC, this led the Student Government Communications Coordinator to post a video on twitter of her tearing down a campus group's sign. The vague and unclear policies at UC make it practically impossible to hold individuals or groups accountable for sabotaging the free speech of others. In both of the examples I have referenced, some

students seem to believe that there should be no consequences for those who attack the free expression rights of students. Administrators are able to hide behind likeminded students to do their dirty-work and vague policies written years ago to turn a blind eye to what is often one-sided attacks on the rights of students. UC's Student Government has also worked to bind students by unjust and ridiculously broad restrictive speech codes through the Student Code of Conduct, which is enforced by university officials.

Another important area addressed by this bill is that students often face exorbitant security fees for bringing speakers whom some oppose. It is nearly impossible for a group to plan a speaking event when they don't know what the costs will be and when they could be hit with a huge unexpected security fee, or have the whole event shut down last minute by the university or unruly protestors.

Ohio colleges must be places that form students to have open and robust minds. Ohio taxpayers deserve the assurance that the colleges they fund do not chill free speech or actively subvert it. And Ohio students should be spending their time studying, learning, and growing as individuals, not fighting their own universities for the right to speak.

Thank you.