



Testimony to the Ohio Senate Education Committee

April 2, 2019

Chair Lehner, Vice Chair Terhar, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the committee, thank you for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to provide testimony.

My name is Jeff Dillon and I am the Legislative Liaison for Americans for Prosperity – Ohio, the state’s largest grassroots organization focused on long-term solutions to country’s biggest problems. I urge you to support Senate Bill 40, the Forming Open and Robust University Minds Act.

S.B. 40, sponsored by Senators Andrew Brenner and Rob McColley, ensures that Ohio’s state-supported institutions of higher education uphold the ability of their students and faculty to freely express themselves. The bill strengthens our universities and protects our taxpayers by ensuring that they adhere to the First Amendment. The bill also allows individuals both on and off campus to fully understand how each university facilitates First Amendment protections by making public their guidelines on free speech and expression.

The Constitution protects free speech for all citizens. Exercising those rights is necessary for maintaining a dynamic society open to new and challenging ideas. College campuses provide an opportunity for students to express their views, have their arguments challenged in a respectful manner, and understand the mutual benefit of constructive debate with those with whom they disagree.

It’s not just the students on our campuses that benefit from this robust debate, it’s all of us. Today’s college students are tomorrow’s members of this committee, our judges, our teachers, and our community leaders. By not merely teaching them about our freedoms, but also by ensuring their opportunity to exercise those freedoms, our universities will create future leaders of our state who are open to dialogue and debate.

S.B. 40 ensures that our already great public universities will be that much better. It will make Ohio a national leader in promoting free speech on campus. For these reasons, we ask you to support S.B. 40 with your vote.

Jeff Dillon
Legislative Liaison

Americans for Prosperity—Ohio