



June 23, 2021

Chair LaRae, Vice-Chair Swearingen, Ranking Minority Member Leland, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee:

My name is Lamar Hylton, and I serve as Vice President for Student Affairs at Kent State University. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this proponent testimony in favor of Senate Bill 126, also known as Collin's Law: The Ohio Anti-Hazing Act.

Kent State University is an institution that prides itself on diversity, equity, and inclusion. For 111 years, our University has continued to set the golden standard for providing a sense of community for every student, faculty member, and staff. Our motto of *Flashes take care of Flashes* shines through with great pride each day, lending a hand in helping to create a warm and inviting university setting for all.

Hazing runs counter to the values of our institution and is strictly prohibited. The student code of conduct includes defined language regarding our hazing policy at Kent State University:

1. Kent State University students as individuals, members of registered student organizations, or any other recognizable groups, teams, or associations of students are expressly prohibited from engaging in hazing. Pursuant to Ohio law under section 2903.31 of the Revised Code, ("hazing") is defined as committing any act or coercing another, including the victim, to commit any act of initiation individually or with any student or other organization that causes or creates a substantial risk of causing mental or physical harm to any person.
2. In addition to Ohio law, Kent state university defines "hazing" as any action or situation intentionally created, whether on or off university premises, to produce mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule.
3. Students and/or organizations charged with violating this rule are subject to disciplinary action under the code of student conduct, rule 3342-4-02 of the Administrative Code, and this register.

In addition to our disciplinary methods, our educational efforts continue to be the hallmark of our work. Our Office for Student Conduct provides training to students and student organizations about hazing. Intercollegiate Athletics at Kent State provides annual educational opportunities for student-athletes on eliminating hazing in sports. Our Fraternity and Sorority Life Office, as well as various fraternity and sorority chapters, plan programming for National Hazing Prevention Week each year. An anti-hazing statement is included in our fraternity and sorority life policies, which are reviewed with chapter presidents and chapter advisors each semester. All members accept the anti-hazing statement through their written affiliation agreement before they are formally added to their chapter's roster. These are but a few educational opportunities designed to keep our University safe.

The passage of Senate Bill 126 will help lay the foundation necessary in making serious and overdue strides towards shifting the culture on college campuses throughout Ohio for the better. In addition, it will positively impact the health and wellness of every Ohioan and, most importantly, this bill *could save the lives of students*.

Incidents like the tragic death of Stone Foltz, the 20-year-old student and member of Pi Kappa Alpha at Bowling Green State University, are never easy to navigate. Although it happened on another campus, it has rippling and long-lasting effects through the entire higher education community and beyond. Let me be clear when I say hazing has no place at Kent State University or any University. For far too long, hazing has been a plague among us, and it *must end now*.

On behalf of students, faculty, staff, and alumni of Kent State University, I strongly urge you to stand united against hazing and pass Senate Bill 126.

Sincerely,



Lamar R. Hylton, Ph.D.

Vice President for Student Affairs
Kent State University