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Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs
Ohio Aviation and Aerospace Technology Committee

Chair Lanese, Vice Chair Young, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the House Higher Education and Career Readiness Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 353, the bipartisan “Testing Your Faith Act.”

This legislation would codify reasonable accommodations to allow college students of all faiths to balance their religious obligations with their academic studies. Any person of faith knows that each year there are occasions when they must prioritize their religious obligations. While many college professors appreciate this and provide the necessary accommodations to their students, there is currently no requirement that they do so.

Specifically, the Testing Your Faith Act does the following:

- Requires that Ohio colleges and universities create a policy to accommodate the sincerely held religious belief and practices of students in regards to exams and other academic requirements by allowing a student to be absent up to three days a semester for reasons of faith or conscience;
- Prohibits institutions of higher education from imposing an academic penalty as a result of a student’s absence under the policy;
- Requires that students who miss exams or other academic obligations as a result of these absences must be provided with alternative accommodations;
- Requires students to provide instructors with a written notice of the specific dates they will be absent within the first 14 days after the first day of an academic course.

Furthermore, the Testing Your Faith Act requires a higher education institute to post a copy of the policy on a prominent location on its website. This must include a non-exhaustive list of major religious holidays or festivals for the next two academic years developed by the Chancellor of Higher Education. The Chancellor must provide each institution with that list at the beginning of each academic year.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify and I welcome any questions from the committee.

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