

Proponent Testimony  
Senate Bill 1  
June 15, 2021

Chairwoman Manning, Vice Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson, Members of the Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in front of you today regarding Ohio Senate Bill 1.

My name is Kristen Cain. I'm 19 years old, a resident of St. Bernard, Ohio, and an incoming sophomore in the honors program at Ohio State. In high school, I was lucky enough to have been required to take personal finance and my hopes are that Senate Bill 1 ensures the same for every Ohio student.

I've been involved with the advocacy for personal finance for a few years now after taking the class at Reading High School and having my own eyes opened. The course left me wondering how other Ohio students get by without it, and why they should have to.

But it did more than teach me the importance of paying my credit card bill on time or investing early with a ROTH IRA; it gave me a trajectory for my career, and really, the rest of my life.

My personal finance class, which I was able to earn college credit for, opened my eyes to the world of business and a range of jobs I had never even heard of, let alone considered for myself. Growing up, I was encouraged to pursue female-dominated professions, like teaching or nursing. While these are admirable careers, I never felt passion for them.

By taking personal finance, I found my passion. Not only was I taught the incredible value of financial literacy, I was shown that I, as a woman, can teach this value to others with a career in financial services.

At Ohio State, I am majoring in finance and minoring in communications in pursuit of a career in financial planning. In my years to come, I want to help individuals and families achieve the financial independence that every person deserves. I want to reiterate that last part. I, along with countless other amazing individuals, wholeheartedly believe that *every* student deserves a chance in life, and that it starts with education. Here and now, you can give Ohio students that chance.

I could stand up here and say that this class needs to be mandated in Ohio for kids like me, and I wouldn't be lying, because it does. But the plain truth is that a personal finance class has the tools necessary to change the course of a student's life, and for a lot of kids that looks much more crucial than my career trajectory. While I am beyond thankful that personal finance was mandatory in my high school, my heart aches for the students being sent into this world unprepared, alone, and lacking resources. For a lot of students, a personal finance class would save them from continuing a generational cycle of poverty in their own lives.

So today, I'm hopeful for Senate Bill 1. I'm afraid, and I'm disappointed that it has taken this long already, but believe me when I say I'm hopeful.

If you care about the futures of Ohio students, I ask that you give this bill strong consideration. Thank you for allowing me to speak in support of Senate Bill 1.