

Chairwoman Manning
Vice-Chair Bird
Ranking Member Robinson
Members of the Primary and Secondary Education Committee

I would like to begin by showing my gratitude for the opportunity to present my position as a student who was fortunate enough to receive a semester's worth of financial literacy, and provide proponent testimony for Ohio Senate Bill 1. My name is Katelynn Mrusek and I am a junior at Berea College in Berea Kentucky, currently studying English Education and employed as a librarian in Berea's education department. As a prospective teacher, I am passionate about education and would argue that every student deserves to learn about finances. After graduating Reading High School in 2019, I entered the adult world with a better understanding of finances than most of my peers. I am grateful to have this knowledge, but I sympathize with my fellow students at Berea College who were not as lucky. Thriving in the United States, a capitalistic, modern nation, requires a basic understanding of money. At this point of time, it is undoubtedly a necessity that each student should be introduced to financial literacy in or before high school.

I come from a small suburban city where finances were not discussed often. From a young age I was warned about the horrific bills and loans that accompany adulthood. However, my mother never actually discussed what it really meant to have bills, or any sort of financial responsibility. Without understanding the nature of money or how I came to be a victim of poverty, I suffered just as my mom had as an adolescent. Problems such as money do not simply vanish due to our own ignorance.

My mother's parents were well off when she was young. A successful landscaping business kept the Mrusek family wealthy and well known throughout our small town. After my grandparents lost their small fortune to alcoholism, money steadily disappeared and my mother ended up fending for herself in the foster care system. No one at home taught her about finances and she was never offered a course through her highschool, the same school that I graduated from. Before I could be educated on financial literacy, I had my fair share of stressing about money as a child. My mom's obvious lack of financial knowledge inhibited her ability to raise four children on a single income. There was never a budget, or any sense of financial stability, resulting in an unstable household where I learned to hide food for the worst of times and raise my little brother and sister. My mom worked an average of six days a week for twelve hours at a time as a night shift nurse, but she was never able to properly care for us, resulting in our separation and my admittance into the foster care system at the age of twelve.

Without the education I received from my finance teacher, Brian Page, I fear that the cycle of poverty would have continued into my adult life and eventually affect my own future family. I had learned the price of college shortly before entering his classroom and made up my mind that it could never be achieved by a person like me. I had spent many nights tossing and

turning on an empty stomach dreaming about make-believe parents that would rescue me and care for me financially, providing me with the tools that I needed to succeed. Little did I know that the tools I desired were lesson plans and activities full of financial insight and advice. I worked and I saved. I kept my financial knowledge in mind as I applied and pursued. During my senior year I was happy to share my achievements with Mr. Page, including a decent savings account and over \$150,000 in scholarships. I will graduate college debt free and I will always remember and share what I learned in Finance with Mr. Page.