

Chairman Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor, members of the committee:

Thank you for accepting my testimony today in regard to proposed language in HB110 that would change the College Credit Plus program to allow nonpublic schools to bar their students from participating in the program.

As a parent, educator, and student advocate now living in Cincinnati, I recall my own high school experience at a parochial school in Rocky River, outside Cleveland. The school did not participate in PSEO, the precursor to CCP, so as a bright student eager to learn advanced content, I didn't have the option of free college coursework that most of my peers across the state did.

Luckily, though, my dad was a community college professor, so, as his dependent, I could take courses—only at *that* college, mind you, not *any* public college like my contemporaries could—for \$5 each. (Yes, this was last century.) So I did get the chance to take the year-long freshman American history sequence but in the evenings and over the summer. This was in addition to my full high school courseload, which included high school American history because the college American history coursework couldn't count for high school credit, since the school did not participate in PSEO. And my A grades in the college courses couldn't count toward my high school GPA.

College Credit Plus, the re-branded PSEO, was supposed to correct all that. And it did.

All nonpublic school students' college courses replace their counterparts in the high school curriculum. The credits students complete in college courses are reflected on their high school transcripts. The grades they earn in higher ed coursework are applied to their secondary records.

Besides the academic equity CCP provides is the economic equity. My parents dutifully paid their Ohio taxes, but their daughters did not have access to PSEO, a taxpayer-funded program that other nonpublic school students did—and certainly all public school students did. All because of the whims of our nonpublic school. CCP corrected this unfairness, allowing all qualified 7-12 nonpublic school and homeschool students to participate if they wish.

However, proposed language in HB110 attempts to take the program back to the dark, inequitable days of decades ago by allowing nonpublic schools to choose to opt out, robbing their students of academic opportunities:

“If a nonpublic secondary school chooses not to participate in the program, the school shall not be subject to the requirements of this chapter or any rule adopted by the chancellor of higher education or the state board of education for purposes of the college credit plus program” (Sub. H.B. 110, p. 1156).

This language gives individual nonpublic schools the power to deprive their students of a program that their parents support through taxes. It would add to educational inequities by allowing access to some nonpublic students (and all homeschool students) but not other nonpublic students.

Perhaps most egregiously, it produces even greater economic disparities, since all nonpublic school CCP students are awarded very limited state funding from a small kitty set aside for that purpose. Public school students each are entitled to as many college credits as they want, up to an annual limit of 30 credits--paid for by the state every year. When the limited state nonpublic allotment is doled out, students can be awarded as few as 4 credits—maybe as much as 12 for the seniors. However, if numerous nonpublic schools opt out of CCP, that funding will get divided among far fewer applicants for that funding, tipping the balance even more in the favor of the lucky nonpublic kids whose schools choose to support their need for college coursework.

Students shouldn't have to be lucky to have their academic needs met, and they sure shouldn't have to be lucky to have equitable access to a taxpayer-funded program.

Ohio has the admirable goal of getting more of its students to matriculate to college and to finish college, and research shows the more college coursework that secondary students complete, the more likely they are to start college, and the more likely they are to earn degrees. Many, many nonpublic students will be deprived of that supported first step toward those goals if nonpublic schools are permitted to opt out of CCP participation. College completion is an unlikely outcome for some of those young adults. Certainly they and their families will be deprived of the cost savings, if they do make it to college.

I know. I had the ability and motivation to complete a lot more college courses in my four years of high school. What I didn't have was the time. Since none of my college courses could replace a single high school course, I was limited to the college courses I could complete on top of a full honors high school load. So my time savings and cost savings in college were woefully low—two mere semester courses--compared to nonpublic students today who are completing two *years* of college courses before high school graduation.

Please don't take Ohio's next generation of motivated, talented learners backward. Please remove the proposed language from 3365.02(C).