

**Ohio Conference of the American Association of University Professors** 222 East Town Street, 2W, Columbus, OH 43215

Testimony of John T. McNay, Ph.D.

Ohio Conference of the American Association of University Professors

Before the Senate Higher Education Committee

Senator Stephanie Kunze, Chair  
 October 30, 2019

Chair Kunze, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Williams, and Members of the Senate Higher Education Committee:

My name is John McNay, and I am President of the Ohio Conference of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). The Ohio Conference AAUP represents over 6,000 faculty statewide. I am also a professor of history at the University of Cincinnati.

As this is my first time before this committee, I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Ohio Senate for the creation of this Higher Education Standing Committee. Given the great importance of higher education and the challenges we face, we believe that this committee is necessary to further explore complex issues and to give stakeholders like us a greater opportunity to engage with all of you. We want to be partners in finding solutions that address the real problems we face in higher education while maintaining educational quality.

Today, I am here to testify on behalf of my association as an interested party to Senate Bill 181. We appreciate the intent of this bill. Faculty hate to see their students graduate with debt, especially when less than 25 percent of their tuition actually is spent on employing the faculty from whom they learn. In addition, faculty always want to see their students gainfully employed, and these types of workforce-education programs could facilitate post-graduation employment.

However, we do have concerns regarding the ambiguities of the financial arrangement of these workforce-education programs, and we believe these are things that should be worked out in the enabling legislation, rather than created in the Chancellor’s template.

We would like to see clarity about who is responsible for the tuition and fees of students participating in the program. The bill does not specify that the employer must cover a certain amount of costs. Additionally, the legislation merely says that the institution of higher education and employer must seek out additional funding sources for any costs of attendance not covered by the employer or financial aid.

Our concern is that outstanding costs would be forced upon the institutions, which raises questions of propriety and fairness. For instance, should a public institution of higher education be responsible for remaining costs of a relationship that directly benefits a private entity? Moreover, would that kind of arrangement be fair to students not participating in the program?

Again, we support this legislation in spirit, but would like to see more guidance given to the Chancellor in the establishment of the workforce-education program template, so that responsibility of costs are established.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions.