



**Senator Andrew O. Brenner – 19<sup>th</sup> District**  
**Senate Higher Education Committee**  
**December 8, 2020**  
**Senate Bill 367 – Sponsor Testimony**

Chairwoman Kunze, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Williams, and members of the Senate Higher Education Committee, thank you for hearing sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 367.

Senate Bill 367 came into being for many reasons, chiefly, the pandemic, but also the constituents who reached out, and the glaring financial burdens placed upon students and their families. In the spring, many, if not all students were sent home, to work remotely, and colleges and universities, some more prepared for remote learning than others, faced educating these students from afar. Come this autumn, some students did return to campus, while others maintained their education from home. What did not change was price tag on that education, nor the requirement that first and second year students must live in university-controlled housing.

This bill would ensure that as this pandemic continues, students are not forced to live in a communal setting, which could compromise their health, and students and parents are not forced to pay the ever more expensive room and board fees. The debt incurred by the average Ohio college student, while less than the national average, does not need to be exacerbated, during a pandemic and during a potential economic downturn, while colleges and universities cash in at the expense of their students. Senate Bill 367 also recognizes what should be universally recognized; these students are adults and should be treated as such. College students are expected to learn and mature at universities, but by forcing them to live in on-campus housing, their agency as individuals is removed.

Off-campus, non-university housing is not perfect and it is not for everyone. Some students learn and thrive within the confines of university housing and that is perfectly okay. The point of SB 367 is to give students a choice, especially during a pandemic, on where and how they live. Senate Bill 367 is as much about choice for students as it is about easing the financial burden that they and their parents face when it comes to higher education. With so many universities and colleges going remote or offering remote options for the foreseeable future, the requirement that students live in on-campus housing is antiquated and unenforceable.

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 367. Madam Chair, members of the committee, I would be happy to answer any questions you have at this time.