

Proponent Testimony of Josie Mayle, Ohio Student Association

House Bill 33

House Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education

April 17th, 2023

Chair Manning, Ranking Member Jarrells, and members of the Ohio House Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education,

My name is Josie Mayle. I am a student at Cleveland State University and a resident of Cleveland. I represent The Ohio Student Association, a nonpartisan, statewide, grassroots organization led by students at campuses across the state. We gear our focus towards helping uplift student voices around higher education policy, especially in terms of affordability. I will be focusing on my personal story with affording my studies.

I started my academic career last year at CSU as a first-generation student coming from a low-income background. With my mother's salary as a bartender, I was receiving the highest amount of federal and state aid, and still, that was not enough to cover the cost of my tuition. I had to leave after the Fall 2022 semester to commit myself to working full time to pay off the remaining balance I had for that semester. My institutional debt was sent over to the Attorney General's office, and I managed to pay it off after six months of full-time work.

This year, I am living off-campus in an apartment, supporting myself. And yet, since my mother got married to a man making enough income to sustain the both of them, I lost all of my federal and state aid. I was able to pay for one more semester of full-time education with the money I earned working over the spring and summer and picked up two jobs to pay my rent. The rest of what little money I have left goes to feeding myself, which sometimes is not an affordable option. This spring semester, I am a part-time student because it is what I can afford between federal loans and my own out-of-pocket payments, without familial support.

Governor DeWine and Chancellor Gardner's proposed improvements to the education budget seems like an answered prayer. The Access Challenge and the proposed increase in funding for the Ohio College Opportunity Grant would greatly help me and others who are in a similar situation as I am. I know many students who are self-supporting, who are parents, who come from low-income backgrounds, or are overall just unable to study comfortably because of the lack of support we receive. Investing in these improvements is a step in the right direction that we are more than willing to commend Governor DeWine and Chancellor Gardner for, and we encourage the state to continue to invest in education even more over the years, as the current improvement rates are not enough to keep up with inflation despite the positive changes they would bring.

Thank you for your consideration and the time taken today,

Josie Mayle