

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Miller, and members of the House Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Jack Cunningham. I am a 25 year old and I have a background in Urban and Community Planning from the University of Cincinnati. I am strongly opposed to HB 151 and its companion bill in the Ohio Senate.

I am the founder and President of Ohio Student Activist Alliance and in my capacity in this role and as a student I have talked with many people who have gone to college to get degrees to grow as an individual and feel safe within that setting. Through the current curriculum and college setting in Ohio, these institutions prove critical space to help all students discover which field they would like to learn from and meet new friends and other connections. This experience has helped me grow as a person and learn more about the backgrounds of others and how Urban and Community Planning may offer critical support to a variety of neighborhoods.

A successful approval and implementation of this legislation would substantially harm students, faculty, and the administration of these institutions irreparably. In enacting this legislation many programs that support students themselves and the professions they will go into will be limited based on the new requirements. This legislation will impact the fields of: Social Work, Teaching, Nursing, and the Medical profession as a whole. These fields work to ensure protections for all Ohioans, or other states/countries that our students wish to move to, are limited in capacity. These fields serve as a means to protect and support all people, especially those who have been marginalized and victimized historically and currently.

These new requirements will make it hard to maintain the accreditation standards that are needed to protect the integrity of these degrees and professionals. Already many young people are moving out of the state due the legislation that has been proposed and enacted by this very body. Further students will move out of this state to look for opportunities in others, which limits the quality of care in our state as well as diminishing the employment and taxes that our state relies on. Most of us young people do not want to leave Ohio, this is the state that I was raised in and am proud to call home. I continue to worry for young people and am concerned about what our future holds if this legislation and many others are approved in their current form.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this dangerous and harmful bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.