

**As Introduced**

**133rd General Assembly**

**Regular Session**

**2019-2020**

**H. B. No. 597**

**Representatives Ingram, Miranda**

**Cosponsors: Representatives Patterson, Smith, K., Kelly, Galonski, Lightbody**

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**A BILL**

To halt the collection of all debt owed to any 1  
state institution of higher education or 2  
hospital operated by a state institution of 3  
higher education, to freeze the accrual of 4  
interest and collection of fees on all 5  
outstanding debt owed to those entities, and to 6  
declare an emergency. 7

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:**

**Section 1.** During the period of the emergency declared by 8  
Executive Order 2020-01D, issued on March 9, 2020, and 9  
notwithstanding any contrary provision of the Revised Code: 10

(A) The state, or its agencies or political subdivisions, 11  
shall not commence collection proceedings against any individual 12  
or entity that owes any amount to any state institution of 13  
higher education or a hospital operated by a state institution 14  
of higher education for that amount owed; 15

(B) No interest shall accrue on any debt owed to any state 16  
institution of higher education or a hospital operated by a 17  
state institution of higher education; 18

(C) The state, and its agencies and political subdivisions, shall not collect any fees related to any outstanding debts owed to any state institution of higher education or a hospital operated by a state institution of higher education; and

(D) Sections 131.02 to 131.03 of the Revised Code are suspended to the extent those sections require collections to be made against individuals or entities owing any amount to any state institution of higher education or a hospital operated by a state institution of higher education.

As used in this section, "state institution of higher education" has the meaning defined in section 3345.011 of the Revised Code.

**Section 2.** This act is hereby declared to be an emergency measure necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety. The reason for such necessity is that the COVID-19 epidemic is putting unprecedented strain on Ohio's economy, and halting state debt collections against individuals owing money to state institutions of higher education or hospitals operated by those institutions will provide economic relief to the citizens of Ohio. Therefore, this act shall go into immediate effect.