



**For Immediate Release**

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**Ohio Community Colleges Praise Passage of Higher Education Reform Bill**  
*Senate Bill 135 Strengthens Transparency, Pathways, and Affordability*

COLUMBUS, OH – The passage of Senate Bill 135 in the Ohio General Assembly this week marks an important milestone in helping improve the state’s higher education system and put more Ohioans on the path to rewarding careers, according to the Ohio Association of Community Colleges.

Among the bill’s many positive provisions are reforms to ensure that students enrolling in Ohio’s public colleges and universities be informed if there are lower-cost options available to them for their course of study, along with guarantees that those course credits will transfer to another school. The bill takes additional steps to improve transparency by helping students and families better understand the actual cost of tuition and fees, student debt, and employment rates. In addition, it provides a new supplemental Ohio College Opportunity Grant award for students who have completed the first two years toward a bachelor’s degree.

“Ohio’s higher education system is stronger today thanks to the leadership of Senator Jerry Cirino, who tirelessly championed these innovative ideas throughout the legislative process to help move our state forward,” said Jack Hershey, president and CEO of the Ohio Association of Community Colleges. “Additionally, OACC would like to thank Chairwoman Lanese and members of the House Higher Education & Career Readiness Committee for their work on improving this important bill.”

“Senate Bill 135 enacts bold, bipartisan higher education reforms that fully embrace the affordability and career-focused nature of opportunities offered by Ohio’s community colleges,” said North Central State College President Dorey Diab, chair of the OACC Presidents Council. “Innovative programs contained in this bill, such as the Second Chance Grant program and the Ohio Guaranteed Transfer Pathways Initiative, will help more students take advantage

of the low-cost, high-quality offerings at our community colleges to earn their credential or degree.”

Hershey noted that some reforms in Senator Cinino’s original legislation were prioritized for passage in the biennial state budget, signed by Ohio Governor Mike DeWine last July. Among provisions enacted earlier were funding the Second Chance Grant as a pilot to help more adults restart education to finish their degrees and giving community colleges the ability to offer Bachelor of Nursing programs as an important help in closing Ohio’s nursing shortage.

The Ohio Association of Community Colleges is comprised of the presidents and trustees of the state’s 23 community colleges. OACC advocates for Ohio’s community colleges before state government, employers and other education and workforce leaders.

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Media Contact:

Jack Hershey or Tom Walsh

Ohio Association of Community Colleges

(614) 221-6222