

Testimony before the House Government Accountability and
Oversight Committee on House Bill 504
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Thank you, Chairman Brown, Ranking Member Clyde, and members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, for allowing me to testify on behalf of Ohio's independent, nonprofit colleges and universities and their students. My name is C. Todd Jones and I am president and general counsel of the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Ohio.

AICUO represents 51 nonprofit institutions of higher education in our state. Our members educate 134,000 students, and award one third of the baccalaureate degrees in Ohio each year, and even higher shares of our state's degrees in mathematics, natural and biological sciences, and other key areas of study.

In 2015, the Ohio Supreme Court ruled that privately employed police forces are so inherently tied to a government function that they must be subject to Ohio's public records law. Sixteen AICUO members have such police forces and are abiding by the ruling. However, since the employers of the police forces are private institutions, they are not immediately afforded the same legal protections that public entities currently have.

House Bill 504 simply extends to non-profit institutions of higher education the same protections currently held by public entities with regard to public records. HB 504 would ensure that our institutions could not be held liable for an institution's disclosure of public records pursuant to the law.

I would like to thank Representative Schuring for his leadership on this legislation and would be happy to answer any questions you may have.