

Testimony before the House Finance
Committee on House Bill 64
Carole Armstrong, Student to University of Rio Grande

Chairman Smith, Vice Chairman Schuring, Ranking Member Driehaus, my name is Carole Armstrong and I am a senior at the University of Rio Grande. I will graduate with a bachelor's degree in Communications and an associate's degree in Political Science on May 2nd.

I want to start by thanking all of you for allowing me to speak today; I've never had an opportunity quite like this. I am elated, and so very honored to be able to share with you how instrumental the Ohio College Opportunity Grant has been to me throughout my collegiate career. Of my siblings, and my parents, I will be the first college graduate. I have applied to the Legislative Service Commission Fellowship, and other government related internships. I have also applied to a couple of graduate degree programs, I am hoping to build on the foundation of my undergraduate career whether that be from a classroom setting, or through direct work experience.

I was raised in a single parent, low-income household in the rural southeastern town of Bidwell, Ohio. Growing up, my Grandparents and Mother stressed the importance of a college education to my sisters and me. In 2010, when both my twin sister and I graduated from high school, I knew without a doubt that attending college was the next step for us. It wasn't until my senior year in high school that I truly realized how expensive a college education could be. My first semester at Capital University my Grandmother wrote a check to cover my remaining balance. In this moment I realized how blessed I was to have a family that was willing to make such a sacrifice just so that I could attend college. My Grandmother willingly made this sacrifice and looked at it as an investment in my future – an investment that not only myself, but also my family will reap the benefits for a lifetime.

I often think about how many other Ohio college students will face the same circumstance, but unfortunately have no one that is able to make the same investment in them. I'd like to think of the Ohio College Opportunity Grant as an investment fund for need-based students all across the state. I am forever grateful to have been a direct recipient of OCOG funding, it has helped provide me with a college education that I otherwise would not have. I know that many doors will be opened to me because of my education. I applaud you for not only continuing funding but also increasing aid to this important resource.

When I think of the funding for the Ohio College Opportunity Grant being increased, I think about the long-term effects. How many more doctors, lawyers, and leaders will our great state help produce through the increase of OCOG funding? When I think about the funding being increased, I think of the impact that it will have on my

community. I work at the Bossard Library in Gallipolis Ohio, and I see on a daily basis, the great potential that my community holds. With every child that comes into the library, I can not help but think of the great opportunities that will be presented to them because they understand the importance of an education at a young age. Due to the increase in funding, a college education no longer has to just simply be a dream; but rather a reality for more children. I truly believe that a whole new world opens up with greater opportunities when a college degree is added to the equation, I know because I am living proof.

Increased funding to the Ohio College Opportunity Grant is such a valuable investment, for our state. As college student that has received the Ohio College opportunity Grant, I cannot thank you enough for your continued investment. An increase in funding ultimately means an increase in the great opportunities for Ohio's future economy. Thank you for your time.