

Ohio Association of Community Colleges (OACC)
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House Higher Education Subcommittee Testimony
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Members of the House Higher Education Subcommittee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the many students who will be affected by the proposed changes to the Ohio College Opportunity Grant next year. My name is Aminah Wharton. I am proud to say that I am a student at Columbus State Community College, and my overall experience has been good. I am in my third quarter, in which I am majoring in Human Resources.

Recently I have heard that there will be changes to the Ohio College Opportunity Grant next year, which will result in lower awards for some students. I couldn't help but wonder *WHY*. Why would they change the eligibility of the OCOG Grant when it provides financial stability for students such as myself.

So today I stand as a voice for the many students who will be affected by this sudden change. The OCOG Grant has provided expenses toward my books, gas for my car allowing me to travel back and forth to school but most importantly helps me to escape the stress of taking out loans. Recently I have had the privilege of being employed thru the work study program with Learning Systems. This has been a great opportunity for me, but unfortunately it has it's limitations. I can only work twenty hours a week. This does help make ends meet, but only in combination with my grant.

Without an OCOG award my only options will be to take out loans or to take a job outside of work study that will let me work more hours. But many employers are not willing to work around my hectic schedule to allow me to make school my first priority. So I ask, without an OCOG Grant what are my other options to make ends meet?

Thank you for allowing me to testify today.