

Press release

Faculty at Ohio's public two- and four-year colleges and universities strongly encourage legislators to make textbook purchases tax exempt

(Columbus, Ohio – February 12, 2018) The Faculty Congress of Ohio today announced its strong support of efforts to exempt textbook sales from Ohio's state sales tax. Faculty leaders from Ohio's two- and four-year colleges and universities unanimously adopted a [resolution](#) that asks Ohio's 132nd General Assembly to pass House Bill 337 (Duffey) as a means of making it easier for students in Ohio to obtain a high quality education at an affordable price.

Textbook costs have increased by more than four times the rate of inflation since 2006 and by more than 1,041% since 1978¹. What had been an incidental expense associated with getting a college education is by itself becoming a significant consideration in the cost of getting a college degree: 26% and 72%, respectively, of the cost of tuition and fees at state universities and community colleges. Adding insult to injury, college and university students in Ohio paid \$30 million in sales tax on textbook purchases during the 2016-17 academic year, according to the Ohio Legislative Services Commission.

“Ohio is at a competitive disadvantage in recruiting students relative to the majority of other states that already exempt college textbooks from state sales tax,” says Dan Krane, co-chair of the Faculty Congress of Ohio. “That makes it harder to increase the fraction of Ohio residents who have associate and bachelor's degrees so that we can effectively compete in the global economy.”

A 2017 survey of more than 1,000 students from 4-year colleges in the US and Canada found that 85% had delayed or avoided purchasing textbooks for their courses even though half did so expecting that their grades would be negatively impacted by their decision. Other studies have shown that students who delay purchasing a book for a course perform less well than those who do not. Faculty worry that they lose time in the classroom because they cannot begin serious discussions about the content of their courses until they have impressed upon students the importance of having the textbook for the course.

“The students at Ohio's public universities are pleased to see the support of the state's faculty in making textbooks more affordable,” says Daniel Palmer, executive director of the Ohio Student Government Association. “The proposed change in tax policy could easily result in more Ohio students deciding to get a certificate or a degree.”

¹ <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/freshman-year/college-textbook-prices-have-risen-812-percent-1978-n399926>

The Faculty Congress of Ohio is deeply committed to supporting and bringing attention to the critical role that Ohio's institutions of higher education play in revitalizing the economy of the State and the nation by attracting and training an educated workforce. The subset of the Faculty Congress of Ohio that speaks on behalf of faculty at Ohio's 14 public four-year universities, the Ohio Faculty Council, has proposed a set of [four synergistic initiatives](#) that, when fully implemented, have been conservatively estimated to result in annual savings of \$300 million in textbook costs to post-secondary students across the state. One of those four initiatives specifically calls for the adoption of legislation like House Bill 337.

###

For more information contact: Dan E. Krane, Chair, Ohio Faculty Council (Dan.Krane@wright.edu; 937-775-2257) or Terry Filicko, Chair, Ohio Faculty Senate (FilickoT@clarkstate.edu; 614-571-8193).

House Bill 337 is sponsored by Representative Mike Duffey (R; Worthington; 614-644-6030).

Faculty Congress of Ohio resolution:
<https://www.ohiofacultycouncil.org/sites/ohiofacultycouncil.wright.edu/files/page/attachments/FCOTaxExemptTextbooks.pdf>

Ohio Faculty Council textbook initiatives:
<https://www.ohiofacultycouncil.org/sites/ohiofacultycouncil.wright.edu/files/page/attachments/TextbookAffordabilityResolutionOFC.pdf>