

March 7, 2023

Dear Education Policy Committee Chair Cwodzinski,

I am writing to you today to state my opposition to the amendment to SF-1311 and requesting that you strike the language on lines 19.8 through 19.11 of the original version of SF-1311, which states: *An eligible institution must not require a faith statement during the application process or base any part of the admission decision on a student's gender or sexual orientation or religious beliefs or affiliations.*

I am opposed to the above-described language, as it is an infringement upon the Constitutional rights of both a school applicant, as well as the rights of the parents of said applicant, to express their moral, ethical, sexual, and religious beliefs, pertaining to education and moral opinions, by preventing them from attending a school or institution that holds to a certain standard that is in alignment with their faith or worldview. The amendment would also infringe upon the transparency of the application process, by preventing the above-named groups from knowing the moral and faith standard for which they are applying. If anything, moral and educational standards should be clearly stated in an application process, to protect the rights of all applicants, by helping them to find an educational institution that fits their moral, ethical, sexual, and religious beliefs. Please consider both our National and State Constitutions as you make your decision for the benefit of all parties involved.

In conclusion: It is my firm belief that students should have the right and freedom to choose the post-secondary institution that is the best fit for their moral and ethical standard. By forcing students away from faith-based colleges it will increase competition for PSEO spots at secular universities and will limit the choices available to all students. No one is obligated to attend a faith-based college for PSEO, so any conflicts regarding moral differences should be identified and addressed as early in the application process as possible.

This is my written testimony and I'm asking for you to add this to the written record.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colin A". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent letter 'A'.

Colin Akehurst
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