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**WIDENER COSPONSORS BILL TO HELP OHIO STUDENTS  
AFFORD COST OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

*HOUSE BILL 167 PASSES OHIO SENATE BY A VOTE OF 31-0*

*COLUMBUS*—State Senator Chris Widener (R- Springfield) today announced that House Bill 167 passed the Ohio Senate unanimously.

“The cost of higher education has been on a rapid rise, and Ohio’s families are finding it harder and harder to afford quality educational opportunity for their children,” Widener said. “In order to bring about the economic growth and job creation this state needs, it is vital that we ensure the next generation can afford the education they need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.”

House Bill 167 authorizes an income tax deduction for the otherwise taxable portion of a federal Pell Grant or Ohio College Opportunity Grant (OCOG) used to pay room and board. Under current law, Pell Grant or OCOG funding is exempt from income tax only if used to cover the cost of tuition and fees.

House Bill 167 previously passed the Ohio House of Representatives 96-0.

Widener continued, “This bill provides some relief to Ohio’s students and their families, and it is a positive step in the ongoing effort to control the rising cost of college education.”

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*Senator Chris Widener serves the people of the 10<sup>th</sup> Senate District, which includes Clark, Greene and Madison counties. He is chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, and a member of the Senate Ways & Means & Economic Development, Government Oversight & Reform, and Rules & Reference committees.*