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House Bill 2  
House Education Committee  
Proponent Testimony  
Bruce Johnson, President  
Inter-University Council of Ohio  
March 13, 2007

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, my name is Bruce Johnson and I am the President and CEO of the Inter-University Council of Ohio. The IUC was established in 1939 as a voluntary educational association of Ohio's public universities. Today, the association represents all of Ohio's fourteen public universities. Our purpose is to facilitate the development of common interests among members and to assist in sustaining and improving the quality of public higher education. The IUC values providing access to a high quality, affordable education and is committed to efficiency and productivity for the more than 250,000 students attending our member institutions. That is why I am here today as a proponent of House Bill 2.

The IUC supports Speaker Husted's priority initiative to "place the duties and responsibilities of the chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents under the oversight of the Governor." As the Speaker indicated in his statement of January 10, 2007, this measure will "allow the Executive better supervision, direction, and accountability of higher education public policy decisions." The IUC also agrees with Governor Strickland that establishing a cabinet-level higher education Chancellor "would enable the Governor to be a stronger, more effective advocate for the higher education community in Ohio." The IUC believes that placing the Chancellor under the Governor's direct authority would ensure a greater degree of accountability in the development of higher education policy. Such a move is critical if Ohio is to effectively compete and win in today's increasingly competitive, technology-based global economy.

To have a more effective higher education policy, the Governor must have the ability to impact that policy as it is being developed and, in so doing, take ownership of that policy. By allowing the Executive better supervision and direction, higher education policy can be developed within the broader context of overall state policy and, more specifically, state budget policy. This approach is something the current governance structure discourages. House Bill 2 does not expand the powers and duties previously assigned to the Board of Regents; it simply transfers those duties and responsibilities to the Chancellor, who must then answer to the Governor. The Regents would continue to exist as an advisory body, which is appropriate.

**The Public Universities of Ohio**

In order to meet the higher education needs of the state, it is important to the IUC that universities Boards of Trustees retain the authority to continue making the day-to-day business decisions. Trustees are familiar with the actual services being delivered on campus and the markets that the various universities serve.

Although Ohio has made progress in increasing higher educational attainment and research activity, much more work must be done. Ohio educational opportunities need to be affordable while providing exceptional quality. Now is the time for our leaders to embrace accessibility, affordability, and accountability in higher education. Only the Governor of Ohio is in a position to provide the vision, influence all of the various interests, and secure public support to make Ohio a national leader in educational attainment. He will need your help.

I urge the House and Senate to move quickly on this issue of governance. I would be happy to answer any questions.