

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Higher Education
For HB 2177

Compiled on: Monday, April 17, 2023 10:27 AM

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Hearing Date: April 17, 2023 8:00 AM

John Martin, Dr.
Self/Academic librarian
Denton, TX

While the impulse to subsidize course materials for college students is a good one, this bill unnecessarily restricts that support to digital textbook subscriptions (also called "inclusive access" programs) rather than the full range of materials used in college courses. Such a bill would have the following effects:

1. It encourages or requires those institutions receiving the grants to adopt expensive digital course materials that may not be necessary or adequate for their curricular needs. These materials have limited access periods and no resale value like traditional textbooks, but are more expensive than OER or library materials.
2. It takes the decision on choosing course materials out of the hands of individual faculty or departments, who are the only ones qualified to make those selections, and puts it in the hands of institutional administrators.
3. It profits academic textbook publishers who already own a large percentage of the course materials market and earn huge profit-margins, in this case subsidized by taxpayers.
4. It discourages the use of more cost-conscious course materials like OER, library resources, or free online resources which would serve students better over the long term.

It would be a better use of public funds to support the kinds of resources mentioned in #4 above, or at least to support the full range of course materials, including traditional print textbooks or other learning materials currently in use.

Julie Leuzinger
self
McKinney, TX

I'm commenting as someone whose child will be going to a state college in a couple of years and the financial impact this might have on us. My concern is that this type of program would discourage more affordable course materials such as OER, library resources, or free resources online (appropriately selected by faculty, of course). There is also no resale value on these materials, which could then go the purchase of new course materials for my child for the next semester. College costs are rising every year, this would only increase the financial burden to me as a single parent. Thank you for considering my feedback.

Suzanne Sellers

Self / Academic Library Dean

Sanger, TX

My academic library has created incentive stipends for faculty to create OER courses. For Spring 2023 awardee course redesign will affect approximately 2,300 students and result in textbook cost savings in the amount of \$265,170. This is the result of just 15 \$1,000 awards! Return on investment for OERs is much higher for the student than subscription products. Please involve librarians in the discussions on how to best reduce textbook costs for students through OER efforts instead of forcing students to purchase their textbooks through subscription products.

Subscription products are readily available in the marketplace and have been tried by many campuses. The value of these products is best left to the market to decide, rather than the government. Very little would be learned through a pilot where the cost of subscription is subsidized, since it will be impossible to distinguish benefits related to the subsidies from benefits of the subscription model itself. Scaling any benefits would mean subsidizing these subscriptions in perpetuity, which would be very expensive. Funding aimed toward addressing course material affordability, access, and outcomes is better invested in OER, where investments can result in savings year after year. Once an OER is created, it can be used for free forever. In contrast, digital subscriptions need to be purchased over and over again for every student.