

# 2022

## ANNUAL REPORT



**BUILDING  
POWER FOR  
OVER 10 YEARS**



**OHIO STUDENT ASSOCIATION**



**BUILDING POWER  
SINCE 2012.**

**THE OHIO STUDENT  
ASSOCIATION**

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## OHIO STUDENT ASSOCIATION

The Ohio Student Association is a statewide grassroots organization led by young people and anchored by student-led chapters on college campuses across the state. OSA brings together young Ohioans from different backgrounds and with different experiences to imagine and fight for a better future. Formed in 2012 in the thralls of the Occupy movement, we have grounded ourselves in the vision of accessible education, transformative justice, and participatory democracy in which every young person has a valued voice.

TOGETHER, WE CAN  
TRANSFORM THE  
STATE OF OHIO.

REAL CHANGE



## 2022 OVERVIEW

We envision a future for our state that is truly for all of us - one where everyone can access higher education without going into debt, where no one has to face the impossible choice of paying rent or buying groceries, where we prioritize funding schools over prisons, and where every person can live full, healthy, dignified lives and realize their full potential. In 2023, we'll continue organizing and building power to make that dream a reality.

2022 was a year defined by an emerging understanding of a 'new normal.' For many students, 2022 was about returning to in-person classes and re-developing the peer-to-peer relationships so many had gone without during the isolating months of online learning, social distance, and quarantine. Being back in person has not meant, however, that challenges have not presented themselves to young people throughout the country. Only a couple of days into the year, the country saw a record-breaking number of new coronavirus infections with over a million reported in a single day.<sup>1</sup>

Another major issue impacting young people has been the rising costs of living and inflation, exacerbated by rising inequality and global conflict. We've seen the consequences of this in rising gas prices, utility bills, and the cost of groceries as well. Indeed, the Consumer Price Index is the highest it has been in almost four decades.<sup>2</sup> Although the country has seen record-breaking profit margins for corporations and the ultra-wealthy, regular people, including students, continue to struggle to make ends meet.

Over the summer, we saw the Supreme Court overturn Roe v. Wade, changing the legal precedent regarding abortion access in our country (meaning it is up to the states to make it legal or illegal). Now more than ever, it is vital that we make sure our representatives at the state and local levels are prioritizing our interests and abiding by their constituents' voices.

In addition, extremist politicians here in Ohio and across the country have been increasingly challenging our voting freedoms. Only recently, the most restrictive voter ID law in the country, HB 458, was signed into law. We also see continued efforts to censor and whitewash history in our schools with bills such as HB 327, HB322, and HB616, which we fought to ensure did not pass in 2022. We also see police brutality, mass incarceration, and an inadequate social safety net continue to harm our families in Ohio.

**WE CANNOT TAKE OUR FREEDOMS FOR GRANTED AND MUST ACTIVELY PROTECT THEM AND ADVOCATE FOR OUR VALUES. WE WILL KEEP FIGHTING IN 2023 AND BEYOND TO PROTECT OUR FREEDOMS AND SECURE THE FUTURE FOR ALL YOUNG OHIOANS.**

<sup>1</sup><https://www.cnn.com/2022/01/04/us-counts-over-1-million-new-daily-covid-cases-in-global-record.html>

<sup>2</sup><https://time.com/nextadvisor/in-the-news/rising-inflation-rising-prices-how-to-plan/>



# HIGHER EDUCATION

## EDUCATION DEBT

OSA is dedicated to fighting for quality, affordable higher education for every Ohioan and for freedom from student loan debt. More than 1.5 million Ohioans collectively owe \$62+ billion in student loan debt. Education debt relief will help close the racial wealth gap, kickstart the economy, and empower young people throughout the country.

OSA and other organizations led by young people have spent years organizing and advocating for student loan debt cancellation. When we started working on this issue more than 10 years ago, most people thought student loan cancellation was a pipe dream. But our tireless collective efforts have paid off, and we have seen a major tide shift regarding education debt.

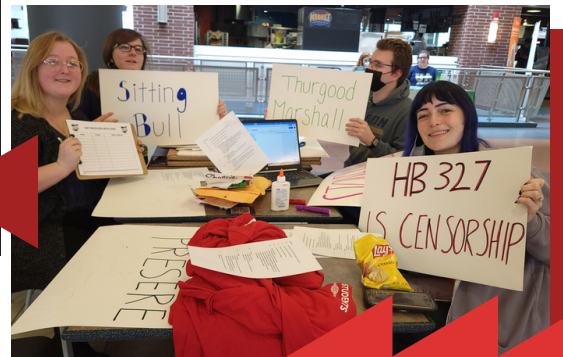
In April, our members and staff stood alongside students and debtors from across the country to show our support for education debt cancellation in DC at the “Pick Up the Pen, Joe!” protest. A month later, the executive administration canceled student loans for around half a million students who attended a for-profit institution. And in August, President Biden announced a student debt relief plan to cancel up to \$20K for students, which would wipe the board of remaining student debt loans for around 20 million people and provide some extent of relief to around 45 million.<sup>3</sup>



Unfortunately, this program has been stalled in court, delaying relief that would otherwise be aiding tens of millions of students during the pandemic recession. Fortunately, however, the pause of federal student loan payments and interest has been extended; according to the Education department, it will resume either in late August or 60 days after the court case is settled if sooner.<sup>4</sup> No matter what happens, we will keep fighting until everyone is free from the burden of student loan debt.

## **HONESTY IN OHIO EDUCATION**

We worked with the Honesty for Ohio Education coalition to hold testimony workshops virtually and in person on multiple campuses to help students advocate for teaching the truth in schools and protecting every Ohio student's ability to receive a fair, honest, and accurate education. This has meant showing up against Ohio's anti-critical race theory bills, HB 322 and 327, and Ohio's version of 'Don't Say Gay,' HB616. Our University of Akron and Kent State University OSA chapters organized rallies in opposition to HB 322 and 327 on their campuses in March, and in June we helped organize a statewide rally in opposition to HB616 during which we unveiled a giant cardboard textbook utilizing visual storytelling to allude to the important history that some Ohio legislators are trying to whitewash and eliminate. We ensured that none of these harmful censorship bills passed during the 2022 legislative session.



<sup>3</sup><https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/08/24/fact-sheet-president-biden-announces-student-loan-relief-for-borrowers-who-need-it-most/>  
<sup>4</sup><https://www.forbes.com/sites/adamminsky/2022/11/22/biden-extends-student-loan-pause-into-2023---key-details/?sh=52297e906c51>



# BLACK STUDENT EQUITY REPORT

In 2022, we launched a project to survey Black students' experiences at institutions of higher education statewide, assessing both affordability and equity issues, from tuition and fees to campus policing. We know racial equity doesn't exist in higher education; Black students are more likely to be first-generation college students<sup>5</sup> and graduate with an average of \$25,000 more in student debt than their white counterparts.<sup>6</sup> This report will seek to identify the issues Black students are dealing with on campus, and will inform a statewide racial equity policy blueprint and advocacy campaign. We have already received over 300 responses and will continue collecting for the first half of spring semester 2023.

10:05 92%

Black Student Equity Survey  
docs.google.com

Your college/university is a good higher education institution for Black Students.

- 1 (Strongly Disagree)
- 2 (Disagree)
- 3 (Undecided/Unsure)
- 4 (Agree)
- 5 (Strongly Agree)

I feel like I belong at my institution.

- 1 (Strongly Disagree)
- 2 (Disagree)
- 3 (Undecided/Unsure)
- 4 (Agree)
- 5 (Strongly Agree)

Would you recommend this school to a Black high school senior?



<sup>5</sup><https://pnpi.org/first-generation-students/>

<sup>6</sup><https://educationdata.org/student-loan-debt-by-race>

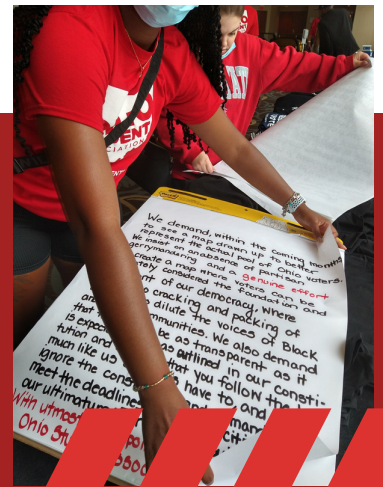


# CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

## VOTING RIGHTS

On the 57th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, OSA members and members of our sister organizing projects within the Ohio Organizing Collaborative led a rally to demand fair district maps and keep up the fight for voting rights. OSA members also wrote and posted a letter to DeWine denouncing gerrymandering and demanding better from our political leaders. During Lane Duck, our members advocated against multiple bills that sought to restrict voting rights, as well as showed up to the Statehouse in coalition with organizations all around Ohio to protest HJR 6, an anti-democracy measure to increase the threshold for passing a statewide ballot measure from a simple majority to 60%.

**"AS YOUNG OHIOANS, SO MANY OF US, TIME AND TIME AGAIN, FEEL EXCLUDED OR UNDERREPRESENTED WHEN IT COMES TO POLICY AND POLITICS, EVEN WHEN THE ISSUES INCLUDED IMPACT US IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES. WE ARE WRITING THIS LETTER BECAUSE WE ARE FIRM BELIEVERS IN DEMOCRACY, AND THAT FAIR MAPS ARE ESSENTIAL TO A FUNCTIONING AND HEALTHY REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY."**



## SUMMER FELLOWSHIP

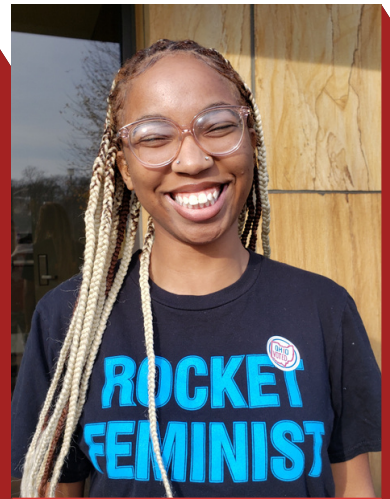
For the midterm elections, OSA chapters across the state conducted voter registration, created and distributed a statewide voter guide, organized early voting events, and manned campus polling locations on Election Day. Through our overall program, over 30,000 new people were registered to vote (around a third of which were between the ages of 18 and 29) and nearly 197,000 utilized our voter education materials.





## GETTING OUT THE VOTE

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## GOTV METRICS

**159,300**

CALLS MADE

**54,742**

TEXTS SENT

**30,342**

FIELD VOTER REGISTRATIONS

**525,000**

MAIL PIECES

# ONLINE PRESENCE

**19K**

VIDEO VIEWS

**17K**

WEBSITE VIEWS

**5K+**

FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS AT  
[/OHIOSTUDENTASSOCIATION](#)

**5K+**

TWITTER FOLLOWERS AT  
[@OHIOSTUDENTS](#)

**2K**

INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS AT  
[@OHIOSTUDENTS](#)

**191**

TIKTOK FOLLOWERS AT  
[@OHIOSTUDENTS](#)





# OUR CHAPTERS

**OSA'S APPROACH TO ORGANIZING IS PEOPLE-CENTERED. FUNDAMENTAL TO OUR VISION ARE STRONG AND INDEPENDENT CHAPTERS LED BY STUDENT LEADERS WHO PLAN AND ORGANIZE AROUND THE ISSUES THAT THEY THEMSELVES ARE IMPACTED BY AND PASSIONATE ABOUT.**

In 2022, our OSA Cleveland State chapter created a student campus safety survey and collected hundreds of responses from students. The survey helped our members to better understand Cleveland State students' experiences with and opinions on campus police, mental health, budgeting, and accountability. The chapter used the results to inform the campaign they are currently building around expanding campus mental health services and creating avenues for students to have input on the university's budget.

Similarly, the OSA University of Akron chapter began building their own campaign to increase funding for mental health services on their campus. At Central State, our members are also organizing to make it easier for student organizations to host events on campus, which will facilitate student organizing and enrich student life.



# MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



**Kristian**

My name is Kristian Crider, senior at Kent State University majoring in Criminology & Justice Studies minoring in Pre-Law & Political Science. Also, I'm a first-generation college student from Cleveland, Ohio. Fall 2022 semester I had the opportunity to participate in the Columbus Program in State Issues with KSU and part of the course was to intern with an organization of my choice. In search of internships I fell in love with the mission of Ohio Student Association and the work they do. I worked on collecting surveys for the Black Student Equity Report which is intended to gather information about Black students' experiences at institutions of higher education across Ohio to ultimately have campus and state level policy solutions to address the inequities faced by Ohio's Black students. I'm passionate about Social Justice, ending Mass Incarceration, and Criminal Justice Reform. I'm grateful for the opportunity to have learned and gained many skills from OSA which I'll carry throughout my career.



**ANDREW**

I'm a freshman in Sociology and Political Science at the University of Akron. OSA has helped me apply what I learn in these subjects to my university's community, and has allowed me to grow individually through its leadership opportunities. Recently, OSA has helped my fellow members and I start campus-wide conversations about issues that directly affect students and faculty by organizing events around the midterm elections and our campus's mental health counseling services. In the coming future, I hope to aid students at the University of Akron in having a louder voice in making administrative decisions that impact them.







**DANIELLE**

I'm a sophomore Biomedical Engineering student at Case Western with a minor in English. My hometown is Toledo, OH, so through OSA I love having the opportunity to work towards political change in the state that's my home. Just in the past few months, I've already gained so much. I've particularly enjoyed being involved in election advocacy with the Midterms this fall—learning how to do things like canvassing and voter registration, things that allow me to directly connect with my college campus and build civic engagement. Another highlight was leading a testimony workshop, where I got to learn a lot about the state's political processes and making your voice heard, and I enjoyed being able to share that with others. Leading the social media/graphics side of the chapter has also been very rewarding, a way for me to connect my graphic design passions with communications for our activist work. Overall, it's also amazing just connecting and working with others with the same passion for social change as me, and I can't wait to see what else we accomplish together.



**CHLOE**

Hi, I'm Chloe Freeman and I am a first year secondary education ELA major at the university of Cincinnati. I serve as the secretary and head of outreach at the UC OSA Chapter. I have worked with OSA in creating a non-partisan voter guide, campus voter registration, advocating for mental health services for students, racial equity on campus, and advocated against censorship bills such as HB 327 and 616. I am a first generation college student and I have always had a passion for activism. At UC I work with UC Votes to help promote voter education, registration, information, and ballot access on campus. I believe that everyone should understand the power that their voice holds and be equipped with the knowledge and resources to make their voices heard. As a future educator I am extremely passionate about equitable education opportunities for everyone. Education should be a safe space for people of any race, gender, sexuality, or religion. Everyone should have access to the tools and resources they need to live up to their full potential. Something that has really motivated me this year is a quote from the musical Hamilton: "If you stand for nothing Burr, what'll you fall for?"

# SELECTED MEDIA

- **Ideastream:** Biden student debt forgiveness provides some relief for Black Ohioans, just not enough
- **Akron Beacon Journal:** Kent, UA student protestors: 'Divisive concepts' bill designed to comfort white people
- **Afropunk:** HB 616, Ohio's "Don't Say Gay" Bill, And How Black Young People Are Fighting Back
- **Spectrum News 1:** Students protest bill aimed at prohibiting certain classroom discussions
- **Ohio Capital Journal:** As young voters, we have the power to decide Ohio's future

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