LEGISLATURE APPROVES LAND GRANT STATUS FOR CENTRAL STATE UNIVERSITY

COLUMBUS—Today the Ohio House of Representatives approved Senate Concurrent Resolution 30, a resolution sponsored by State Senator Chris Widener (R- Springfield) and Senate Minority Leader Eric Kearney (D-Cincinnati) that would designate Central State University as Ohio’s second Land Grant Institution under the Morrill Act of 1890.

“One hundred and twenty years ago the General Assembly nearly made this designation, but stopped short due to a squabble over $25,000 in federal funding. Today we are righting that wrong and making history,” Senator Widener said. “As Ohio’s second land grant school, Central State will grow in exciting new ways and students will be afforded many more opportunities.”

“This is a great day for Central State University,” said Senator Kearney. “It is an honor that I could be a part of such a collaborative effort that will extend the legacy of this university for years to come.”

Follow unanimous approval by the Ohio Senate and the House Education Committee, the Ohio House of Representatives passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 30 by a vote of 84-1. With this stage complete, attention now turns to Congress where additional legislative action is needed to allow Central State to apply for federal funds only available to 1890 land grant schools.

During consideration of SCR 30, members heard testimony in favor of Central State’s Land Grant bid from the institution’s President, John Garland, as well as Ohio State President E. Gordon Gee and Jim Petro, Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents.

In his testimony, President Garland from Central State summarized the potential that 1890 status brings: “Designation as a land grant institution will provide more resources to Central State, enabling us to increase our teaching and research capacity in areas of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and enlarge our outreach and support to the surrounding area.”

Speaking to the value of 1890 status, Chancellor Petro commented that: “Designating Central State University as an 1890 land grant institution is, in my opinion, keeping with the history of many HBCU’s granted 1890 land grant status; it will further Central State’s mission of providing a valuable education, will expand upon the school’s current agricultural and mechanical arts programs, will allow another state institution to draw down federal funds aimed at increasing educational attainment and will open the door to wonderful collaborative opportunities with The Ohio State University and other 1890 institutions.”

“By passing Senate Concurrent Resolution 30, we rightfully recognize the extraordinary historic and present impact that Central State University has made in Ohio,” President Gee from Ohio State remarked. “A strong Central State is a strong Ohio state and a strong Ohio.”

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Senator Chris Widener serves the people of the 10th 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.

Senator Eric H. Kearney represents the 9th Senate District which includes parts of Cincinnati, St. Bernard, Elmwood Place, Cleves, Cheviot, Norwood, Golf Manor, Columbia Township, Deer Park, Silverton, Springfield Township, North Bend and Addyston. During his tenure in Ohio’s General Assembly, Senator Kearney has championed the issues of small business development, child safety, healthy choices, and crime prevention.