

### **Sponsor Testimony: HB 57 (Domestic Steel for School Construction)**

Chairman Young, Vice Chair DeVitis, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan: thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on HB 57. This bill requires<sup>1</sup> that all state institutions of higher education, public schools and private schools receiving public funding<sup>2</sup> use domestic steel in all future steel construction and renovations.

The necessity of this bill became clear to me in the wake of the water contamination crisis that occurred in my district last year. The one middle school in Sebring that was found to have lead contamination in its water fountain infrastructure was built with pipes that were produced in China. These pipes were visibly corroded and faulty when maintenance staff broke down the wall and investigated the pipes. I believe that in choosing to use defective foreign steel for critical infrastructure that serves young students and affects their daily health, we were not doing all we could to ensure the safety of our children.

In addition, we're currently living in a time where our global economy makes foreign products increasingly accessible. Unfortunately, China has seized on this opportunity by engaging in illegal over-subsidizing of their steel industry in order to ensure that they can sell it for below production cost. Their product is consequently cheap and not up to quality standards. There have been several publicly reported incidences of Chinese steel producing unsafe infrastructure and faulty products.<sup>3</sup> When it comes to our children, we need to ensure that we are not sacrificing any level of quality or safety, and that means turning to what we know is reliable: American steel.

There are also significant economic benefits to using domestic steel on school campuses. Our state's steel industry provides \$7.2 billion for the Ohio economy and \$600 million in state taxes.<sup>4</sup> In addition, United Steelworkers reports that the American steel industry is one of the most efficient in the world, often producing a ton of finished steel in under one man-hour. Our own economy and the hardworking steel workers in it, who have suffered severely in recent years from the corrupt, fraudulent system in China, deserve our support and business. Continuing to support Chinese steel means continuing to back an incredibly unstable and unfair foreign industry that undercuts U.S. and Ohio economic growth.

Let's prioritize our children's health and safety, while also promoting jobs and economic growth in our own country. I hope you'll join me in supporting the use of solely domestic steel in all future public and private school construction. Thank you for your time and I invite any questions you may have.

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<sup>1</sup> "The board of building standards shall adopt rules..."

<sup>2</sup> "Financed by bonds issued by the Ohio higher educational facility commission.."

<sup>3</sup> Unsafe bridges in the US, Aug. 2014 (NYT): <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/05/opinion/the-price-of-made-in-china.html>; Australia Nov. 2015 (ABC): <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-11-17/safety-warning-over-fabricated-chinese-steel/6949506>

<sup>4</sup> Legislative Information Systems.