

Committee Assignments:

Finance
Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education – Chair
Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and Homeland Security
Higher Education and Workforce Development
State and Local Government
Public Utilities



Commissions/Special Committees:

Veterans' Caucus – Chair
BRAC and Military Affairs Task Force – Chair
Ohio Aerospace and Aviation Technology Committee
Ohio Third Frontier Commission Advisory Board
Joint Committee on College Affordability
Ohio Latino Affairs Commission

State Representative Rick Perales

Ohio's 73rd House District: Western Portion of Greene County

Economic Development, Commerce, and Labor Committee

House Bill 551 Minor Workers – Perales, Romanchuk

Sponsor Testimony

May 22th, 2018

Chair Young, Vice Chair Riedel, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and members of the Economic Development, Commerce, and Labor Committee. I thank you for the opportunity to testify, with my joint sponsor Rep Romanchuk, on behalf of House Bill 551, which loosens burdensome workplace restrictions for 16 and 17 year olds who wish to pursue mentorship opportunities in the construction and manufacturing industries here in Ohio.

Construction and manufacturing industries are at the core of our society. Every citizen has benefitted in some way from these fields; either through the buildings they inhabit or the products that they use. Our youth should have the opportunity to gain work experience in these fields without extensive restrictions. Many 16 and 17-year-olds spend their summers working cash registers or flipping burgers. We should not deny our youth the opportunity to experience truly “hands-on” mentorships in vital industries that could lead to a career. Construction and manufacturing jobs are career paths that have the potential to lift individuals out of poverty. They typically pay well above minimum wage, as almost nine out of 10 apprentices become employed after completing their programs. A trade school

graduate can expect to see a starting wage of about \$50,000 a year in these critical construction and manufacturing industries.

One of the key provisions of this bill is that employers will provide training to their minor employees before they can begin to work. This training will increase safety in the work environment, and ensure that the minors receive basic and applicable knowledge to utilize in their future career endeavors. This bill would allow 16 and 17-year-old youth to be hired by construction and manufacturing employers, and permit them to use a limited number of power tools after taking federally approved safety classes. It is consistent with all federal safety requirements and guidelines concerning minors. Nationally, there are over 500,000 open construction jobs, and Ohio is estimated to have over 20,000 of them. There is concern among 75% of construction firms that they will be unable to find enough skilled tradespersons to fill these vacancies. With loosened state restrictions, we will allow our youth to continue in the industry, and fill the many vacant construction positions that exist.

Now, I would like to turn it over to my joint sponsor, Representative Romanchuk