

MVMC | MAHONING VALLEY MANUFACTURERS COALITION

June 18, 2018

The Honorable Ron Young
Chairman
Economic Development, Commerce and Labor Committee
Ohio House of Representatives
77 S. High St., 13th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Young,

I am writing on behalf of the Mahoning Valley Manufacturers Coalition, and industry-led sector partnership representing more than 100 members in Trumbull, Mahoning, and Columbiana Counties to express our support of H.B. 551.

Manufacturers in the Mahoning Valley region of Ohio came together in 2011 to address workforce and training issues in the Greater Youngstown area and help meet the growing skilled workforce needs of its member organizations. Like manufacturers across the country, members of the MVMC were unable to find skilled talent to fuel their expansion. The Coalition also needed to confront the fact that manufacturing career pathways did not exist in the region and job candidates often lacked hands-on, real-world experience. The Coalition recognized that the shortages in the talent pipeline were due in part to misperceptions about jobs and the work environment in the manufacturing industry. This needed to be addressed as well.

MVMC developed a new and collaborative approach in which the manufacturers convened, educated, charged, and mobilized the region's key stakeholders to initiate actions to support the manufacturing sector and create career pathways for individuals. TPMA organized discussions to identify issues, analyze the root causes of these issues, discuss and develop ideas/solutions infused with best practices, and identify resources to better align the region's economic, education, and workforce institutions. These efforts helped increase awareness of manufacturing skill shortages, and correct misperceptions about the industry, to attract individuals into the talent pipeline. The MVMC has grown from a core group of manufacturers to a full coalition of K-12 schools, workforce development partners, universities, and community colleges in the Mahoning Valley Region with more than 100 members.

MVMC's model of "employers actively engaged with education is just what we need nationwide."

Joseph Fuller, Professor of Management Practice, Harvard Business School

We launched our industrial maintenance group apprenticeship program in Fall 2017. This follows the machining apprenticeship program that was launched in 2016, enabling small- to mid-sized manufacturers to plug into a training program and receive grant funding through the Greater Oh-Penn Apprenticeship Network to offset their costs.

241 W. Federal Street
Youngstown, OH 44503

Other results include:

- Increased public workforce system investments in manufacturing-related training programs from 3.5% to an average of more than 30%;
- Achieved record enrollment in regional Ohio Technical Center programs;
- Resulted in more than 1,330 National Association of Manufacturers (NAM)-endorsed nationally recognized credentials in three years alone;
- Created group-sponsored apprenticeship program and attracted 28 manufacturers to participate;
- Influenced regional curriculum and articulation; and,
- Created Industry Needs You campaign – attracted over 34,000 page views.

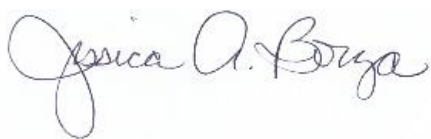
Currently, the MVMC is working with Youngstown State University, Eastern Gateway Community College, and other regional partners to advance the Mahoning Valley Innovation and Commercialization Center, a reuse of the former misdemeanor jail in downtown Youngstown. When completed, this \$30 million training center will provide students with the equipment and instruction to acquire skills that local manufacturers need.

MVMC also recently launched WorkAdvance 2.0, an initiative where companies will identify current employees who have the potential for upward mobility. They will provide tailored training and coaching to those employees, leading to eventual career advancement.

So, you can see, we are attempting to tackle this multi-faceted manufacturing workforce challenge with multi-faceted solutions. However, we've found the most effective strategies introduce young people to manufacturing careers before the age of 18. While we have worked through Ohio's Career and Technical Centers to introduce work-based learning to those involved in training programs, we understand this legislation will open up similar opportunities to those not formally tied to manufacturing training programs for whatever reason. Some may not have considered manufacturing career pathways before the age of 16 or 17 and, therefore, may not be enrolled in formal training programs. Others may graduate or separate from school before the age of 18. Given the demographics we are facing, we need to ensure we aren't limiting any prospective employee from the opportunity to work in manufacturing, especially in the tightening labor market. H.B. 551 will give companies the flexibility to allow for more young people to get started in manufacturing careers.

We thank you for your consideration of this bill and urge your support.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jessica A. Borza". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Jessica A. Borza
Executive Director