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**HOUSE BILL 551 – MINOR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES
WRITTEN PROPONENT TESTIMONY
OHIO HOUSE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, COMMERCE & LABOR COMMITTEE
JUNE 19, 2018**

Chairman Young, Vice-Chair Riedel, Ranking-Member Lapore-Hagan and members of the Ohio House Economic Development, Commerce & Labor Committee, on behalf of the nearly 23,000 governing members of NFIB in Ohio, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of House Bill 551, legislation prohibiting the Ohio Department of Commerce from forbidding a 16- or 17-year old who receives specified training from being employed in a construction or manufacturing occupation if the minor's employment in the occupation is permitted under federal law

By way of background, a typical NFIB/Ohio member employs 20 or fewer and has less than \$2 million in annual sales. Our members come from all industries, and we look like any Main Street in your legislative districts.

Workforce issues continue to frustrate our members across the state. We hear from our members in all regions of the difficulties they face finding individuals to fill open positions, particularly as it relates to having skill sets needed in construction and manufacturing. House Bill 551 provides an opportunity for 16 and 17-year-old minors seeking employment in these industries, so long as they are not precluded from doing so under state or federal law. Additionally, these individuals would be required to undergo training on workplace safety, a 10-hour course on industry safety and health hazard recognition, and instructions on how to properly use necessary tools.

We feel House Bill 551 serves as a quasi-apprenticeship program stimulating the interest of individuals to enter these critical fields that are significant contributors to Ohio's economy. We continue to hear the mantra that "college is not for everyone." House Bill 551 certainly provides an avenue for individuals to begin learning a set of skills for in-demand industries, preparing them to enter the workforce upon completion of their primary and secondary education.

NFIB believes House Bill 551 provides a meaningful opportunity for young individuals to learn skills in the construction and manufacturing industries while helping fill the needs of employers struggling to find employees. The bill also institutes appropriate workplace training and safety requirements protecting these minors on the job. We urge your favorable consideration of House Bill 551.

Thank you for your consideration,

Christopher J Ferruso
Legislative Director