

Chairman Brenner, Vice chair Slaby, Ranking member Fedor, and members of the House Education and Career Readiness Committee. I am pleased to offer testimony in support of HB176.

My name is Lynn Anderson and I am a retired Vocational Instructor of 35 years. I presently live and work a hobby farm with horses and angus beef cattle in Carroll County. I serve on a board of trustee member for Carroll County Farm Bureau and I am active in the community. I have three adult daughters all of which received college degrees and one is in the field of education. I received an associate degree in mechanical engineering from Start State Technical college in Canton, Ohio and later finished a Bachelor degree in Technical Education from Kent State University.

I taught in the Vocational School for 35 years beginning in 1976. The reason for posting the date is to indicate that the vocational setting today is nothing like it was then and I believe the changes in the educational environment were not for the betterment. That is the reason for my coming forward with testimony at this time when the opportunity presents itself. In discussions on education, many if not most; don't think about how "Common Core" initiatives have affected Vocational preparedness.

The trickle down effect.

When I began my career we started with 3 1/2 hours of lab hands on training and offered two 45 minute classes of related technical instruction.. That was 5 hours per day of intensive training. Over a two year course (at roughly 186 days a year) computes to 1,860 hours of training. I might add as well that the related technical classes offered additional math, science, and English pertaining to their chosen career.

As a result of Common Core standards in the public schools particularly in the final years of my teaching, they required additional Math and English classes for graduation requirements. Because of this our school changed the time frame allowed for the Vocational studies. We soon found ourselves with a 2 1/4 hour lab hands on training and one 35 minute related class. Less than 3 hours a day. This computes to approximately 1053 hours of training. WE LOST 57 % of our core vocational instruction!

If this was not a blow to achieving well prepared students for the work force, then what came next was. The last 5 years in my teaching they began cutting staff and combining the classes under one instructor. The trend across the State was to "OX" the programs and cut the salary in the district in half. In this process they lost well qualified seasoned instructors that for the most part were replaced with younger, less seasoned staff members. However, the larger issue was the instructional time frame. The instructor now with combined teaching duties would find himself spending a good deal more time with the Junior students than the Senior students because of their lack of knowledge and ability. Clearly this created an additional void in the ability to prepare the students for the work force. In my opinion it amounted to possibly another 35% loss in preparedness. In the wake of all this turmoil, what was achieved in a two year career choice was now impossible to accomplish. It's my opinion that to prepare the same student today that was prepared for the work force in the 70's - 80's - and 90's would need four years of instructional time frame. And yet....the administration of the school wanted the students to be prepared well enough to be able to be A.S.E. certified in their field.

It's hard to say what all caused this deterioration of career training, whether it was additional core academics, financial difficulties, funding, or values. However, I do know I experienced and saw the value of Career Technical Training seriously damaged due to implementing additional classes. As an advocate of Career Training I feel that the schools should be able to choose "related" course work such as computer analysis, hydraulic diagnosis, or related technical information as opposed to Algebra II or English IV.

Please don't misunderstand that I am not a proponent of academic excellence. I am. But given the structure of our schools and the allotted time frame I believe better value is achieved by streamlining a focused career and the schools need to be allowed choice in direction. That choice should be based on ones specialty and the course work should be compatible.

Thank you for this opportunity to share and even though I am retired from the educational work force my observation and experience could make a difference in how education moves forward in the future. I don't know the exact statistic of Technical trained vs college career individuals but I am guessing this affects 60% of our population in career training. If you have any further questions, I will do my best to answer them.

Sincerely Submitted,

Lynn Anderson