

**Written Testimony regarding HB 49**  
**Heidi Jones with Marion Matters**

I am writing this testimony to express my support of House Bill 49 and Healthier Buckeye Councils. As recipients of the initial HBC grant, it has allowed Marion Matters to expand our Bridges Out of Poverty movement into the workplace, by offering businesses an innovative, low cost, shared solution to high turnover. The HBC has used the funds to initiate the first Employer Resource Network (ERN) of its kind in Ohio. The ERN provides member businesses with an on-site Success Coach who works with at risk employees. The Through the grant cycle Marion Matters has secured OhioHealth, Andersen, and ProScape. The Success Coach has the potential to reach over 3000 employees, many of whom are low-waged. The Coach works with these employees to strengthen resources, helping them to maintain employment. As employees become stronger and maintain employment, businesses become more stable, as they are eliminating turn-over costs. As employees and businesses maintain stability, our community becomes stronger, safer, and secure. Resulting in an improved economy.

Marion Matters Inc. is a local 501 (c) 3 in Marion, Oh. In 2009, the Supreme Court had approached Judges in Ohio regarding Bridges Out of Poverty training. Marion County was fortunate enough to have Municipal Court Judge Teresa Ballinger attend the Bridges training. After receiving the training, Judge Ballinger convened a local group of leaders and introduced them to Bridges concepts. A Steering Committee was formed in 2010, leading to the creation of Marion Matters, Inc. We became incorporated in 2011 and earned our 501 (c) 3 status in July of 2012. Marion Matters has been using the Bridges Out of Poverty principles to engage the under-resourced population in Marion for the past seven years. We have witnessed families learn concepts that took them from homelessness to home ownership, and

everything in between. Marion Matters hosts an annual two-day Bridges workshop to educate the community at large on how to communicate across economic class lines in an effort to provide leadership in developing pathways out of poverty through education and support.

In addition to Bridges Out of Poverty and The Marion Area ERN, Marion Matters offers education and support for the under-resourced population through Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin'-By World Building your resources for a better life, Transitions, Financial Literacy, and the youth curriculum The R Rules.

Marion Matters depends solely on local funding through The United Way of Marion County, The Marion Community Foundation, The Marion Rotary Club Foundation, OhioHealth, and in-kind donations from The Marion Community Credit Union.

In closing we are asking that you consider adding \$11.5 million over the next two fiscal years to allow HBC Communities to expand their impact in each perspective community and beyond.