



State Representative John E. Barnes, Jr.

HB 203: Youth Summer Jobs Pledging Initiative

Thank you, Chair Duffey, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Sweeney, and my esteemed colleagues on the Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee for the opportunity to give sponsor testimony on House Bill 203, which will establish a youth summer jobs pledging initiative to increase access to summer employment opportunities for high school and college youth in Ohio.

As you have seen, there has been an increase in youth violence and activity. We are still in the midst of economic recovery and based on the evidence the Federal Reserve has refused to raise interest rates as the economy continues to show signs of softness, and because we have huge numbers of adults who are unemployed, we are failing to give our young people the experience of a lifetime with receiving that first job.

House Bill 203 requires:

- The Director of Development Services to establish a youth summer jobs pledging initiative to increase access to summer employment opportunities for high school and college youth in Ohio and to adopt rules to establish, operate, maintain, and improve the initiative.
- The Development Services Agency to identify and compile pledges of summer job opportunities, which must be made available through a searchable database on the OhioMeansJobs website and publicized in a manner that targets high school and college youth.
- The establishment of a scale to determine the suggested number of employment opportunities an employer may pledge to be available to high school and college youth during the summer, based on the employer's assets, annual gross receipts, and number of employees.
- The development of a form on the OhioMeansJobs website where youth are encouraged to answer the question, "What do you dream about doing with your first paycheck?"

anonymously, with answers to the question to be compiled in an annual report that must be submitted to legislative leaders in the General Assembly

House Bill 203 will integrate this initiative into the existing Ohio Means Jobs website, which is a one stop portal for everything in workforce, and integrating this initiative with this website would contribute significantly to having almost zero cost to the state of Ohio and making this initiative consistent with ongoing Ohio workforce initiatives.

We do not seek, in this bill, to impose burdensome requirements on businesses, and what we are looking for is to establish business partners. This is not intended to place responsibilities on business through public policy, but we are asking businesses to step up and volunteer to this initiative, which will contribute significantly to coming together to work together to respond to our collective interests of building the best 21st century workforce.

Thank you again for this opportunity, I would be happy to answer any questions.