



Ohio House of Representatives

Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee

3-7-2018

HB 166 / Proponent Testimony

Testimony of Bill Bussey, Director of OTC Division, Ohio Association of Career Technical Superintendents

Chairman Duffy, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the Ohio House Higher Education Committee, my name is Bill Bussey and I am here to speak in favor of Sub. HB 166. I am currently Executive Director of the Ohio Technical Centers (“OTCs”) division of the Ohio Association of Career Technical Superintendents (“OACTS”). I have over forty years’ experience in Career Technical Education—this includes twelve years as an OTC Director and nearly 14 years as the Superintendent of Mid-East Career and Technology Centers. I am testifying today to explain part of the history of OTCs and why OTC Directors and Career Center Superintendents support this bill.

The State formed OTCs in the late 60s and early 70s in response to the demand for a skilled workforce. Originally called “Adult Education Programs” and later “Adult Workforce Development Programs,” the name of “Ohio Technical Centers” was solidified in 2008. Throughout the 60s and 70s, OTCs were located and governed by local Joint Vocational Schools, (now called Career and Technical Centers), Comprehensive schools or compacts. It was customary at that time that Technical Colleges, who were governed by a different board, were located on the same campus. OTCs were to provide training for certificate programs. Technical Colleges educated adults

for associate degrees. Both led to an occupation. An example of this is on a plaque on the wall of Taylor Hall on the campus of the Scioto County Career Technical Center. Part of the message on the plaque reads the following:

“The Scioto County Joint Vocational School Board of Education Officially renamed this building Taylor Hall. In honor of Frank C. Taylor, this vocational district’s first superintendent who initiated diligent leadership for the formation of vocational education in this county. Mr. Taylor was also the president of the Scioto technical college, for which this structure was originally built and utilized from September 1971 thru September 1978. In September 1978 the Scioto Technical College moved to their new facilities and became a part of the Shawnee State Community College. This building was released at that time to this vocational district for expansion of their facilities.”

Both the colleges and OTCs grew in the number of programs offered and number of students through the 1980s and 90s. Throughout the 90s there was much debate about OTCs moving from the governance of the Ohio Department of Education to working under the governance of The Ohio Department of Higher Education. There was much resistance to this until 2008 when the legislature instituted reforms that required OTCs report to and get funding from ODHE. Funding for OTCs through the state system was approximately 22 million dollars in the year 2000. The last budget line item for OTCs is approximately 16 million dollars.

This bill does two simple things: 1) Creates a uniform definition for “OTCs” under the revised code, as none currently exists; and 2) defines OTCs as “institutions of higher education” for purposes of certain grant programs and funding opportunities.

Our rationale to support the bill includes the following:

1. Get recognition deserved and have the same opportunities to apply for funding and other initiatives. In many cases, OTCs can perform certificate training, customized training, and services that will satisfy the needs and requirements of various state programs, grant opportunities, and other initiatives, for which they are not currently eligible.
2. Be recognized as a true member of the ODHE. In many cases such as “Attainment 2025,” OTCs can have a very significant impact on advancing the educational and skill levels of adults and ultimately the workforce. Being recognized as an “Institution of Higher Education” should get more attention from the steering committee and therefore ideas to expand certificate programs and credentials will come forth.
3. If recognized as an IHE, policymakers will know that we are accepted at the same level as Community and Technical Colleges and four year universities. OTC directors and others will not feel they are “on an island” since being transferred to ODHE. I don’t believe the lack of attention and recognition is intentional. OTCs do serve a smaller number of students than the other two segments of ODHE, but OTCs provide much needed education and training for thousands of Ohio adults, and also have a much higher retention, completion, and placement rate than colleges and universities. OTCs are a very significant part of workforce development in Ohio.

I urge you to improve the opportunities for adults by passing this bill.

Thank you for time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.