



Office of Representative John E. Barnes, Jr.

Thank you, Chair Duffey, Vice Chair Antani, and my esteemed colleagues in the Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee for the opportunity to give sponsor testimony on Sub. H.C.R. 29.

Here's the situation. 20 U.S.C 1099b authorizes the U.S. Secretary of Education to recognize, including but not limited to, the Higher Learning Commission as an accreditation body for certain degree programs within our university system. Under current law, students in a community college for certain occupations receive an associate's degree and equally situated students who complete career technical education training receive a certificate. The State of Ohio operates about 92 facilities under the umbrella of career technical planning districts (hereafter CTPD), around 49 of which are joint vocational school districts (hereafter JVSD). CTPD and JVSD respectively provide training that in many instances is very similar or equal to community colleges, the latter of which are accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. It is important to note that in some instances both of the respective students qualify to sit for state exams and obtain a state license primarily in but not limited to medical fields, which further demonstrates a quantification of learning.

The purpose of the proposed change to federal law within the resolution is to:

1. urge the Secretary of Education to determine whether or not the Department of Education has the legal authorization under the aforementioned U.S.C to include the accreditation of CTPD and JVSD; or
2. urge the United States Congress to pass a change that would authorize the Secretary of Education pursuant to 20 U.S.C 1099b and any changes thereof, to establish equal accreditation for two-year high school programs in CTPD and JVSD for students who essentially complete the same work as other students enrolled in similarly situated community colleges.

The goal is to:

1. significantly reduce college tuition by as much as 50% for students who may pursue baccalaureate degrees in similarly situated fields of discipline;
2. eliminate the necessity of articulation agreements between two-year high school programs in CTPD and JVSD, which now require shared tuition revenue;
3. increase the State of Ohio issuance of associate's degrees by appropriately accrediting two-year high school programs in CTPD and JVSD, which can significantly increase qualified applicants for in demand occupations; and
4. contribute significantly to creating career ladders that will aid with student attraction to post-secondary university programs.

I believe this change will create public value by seizing an opportunity to inspire people with a reason to believe they have a stake in the future—a future where we respond to the needs of businesses by promoting growth and job opportunities.

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