



January 22, 2018

Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chair Scherer, Ranking Member Rogers, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, good afternoon. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide written testimony in favor of House Bill 186, legislation that would provide an income tax deduction for certain college-related expenses. My name is Dave Wiles and I am the President of CT Consultants.

CT is an Engineering Consulting Company headquartered in Mentor, Ohio with offices throughout Ohio including Columbus, Youngstown, Cincinnati, Toledo and Akron. We also have an offices in Kentucky, Tennessee and West Virginia. We employ a highly educated workforce of 230 employees. The majority of the owners of our privately held firm reside in Ohio. We provide engineering consulting services related to infrastructure development to government and private clients. While much of our work is in Ohio, we are currently providing services in several other states including West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Louisiana, North Carolina and Texas.

Firms like ours provide services to local governmental entities throughout the State of Ohio. These firms have more recently faced some difficult periods. As the result of hard work by a very talented group of highly educated employees in association with our clients, we have not only been able to meet the economic challenges that have arisen, we have also been most fortunate to weather the economic downturn and prosper.

Having the right mix of experienced staff is one of the keys to developing a successful and sustainable company. The recent economic challenges however have not allowed us to hire an appropriate number of new graduate engineers. We are now having to play catch up in our efforts to build upon our success and continue our expansion both in Ohio and nationally. Recruiting and training new graduates requires a significant investment. To compete, we also need access to top quality graduates. It is my opinion that this proposed legislation could help us to expand our employee base here in Ohio.

On a personal note, I am a lifelong Ohio resident and a 1981 graduate of The Ohio State University. My wife is from Florida and graduated from Florida State University. We chose to make our home and raise our family in Ohio. We have two sons who have both graduated from college, one with a Computer Engineering Degree and the other with a Computer Science Degree. Ohio must find ways to keep our talented students in Ohio. Further, we must find ways to attract future students in important areas such as engineering, which is experiencing a serious decline in enrollment.



I have talked to many young professionals who have described the financial hardships of carrying their college debt. While they enjoy the challenges of their professions, they wonder if they made the correct choice given the amount of their paychecks that is dedicated to paying education related debt. It is logical to assume that these types of conversations are also occurring with High School Students who are choosing not to pursue additional education.

On behalf of CT Consultants as well as the Wiles family I offer my support of this legislation that would have a positive impact with respect to the future of our current students, young graduates and the State of Ohio.

Thank you,

CT Consultants, Inc.

Dave Wiles, PE
President