



June 5, 2019

The Honorable Paul Zeltwanger
Chairman
House Economic and Workforce Development Committee
Ohio House of Representatives
77 S. High St., 12th floor
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: House Bill 2 – OMA Written Proponent Testimony

Dear Chairman Zeltwanger:

The Ohio Manufacturers' Association (OMA) writes today in support House Bill 2. The OMA has long recognized the need for a more skilled workforce to meet the demands of our state's global manufacturing economy.

House Bill 2 provides three new and innovative funding streams to help manufacturers. These three programs also complement the successful network of industry sector partnerships that manufacturers across Ohio are using to address regional workforce needs. These programs are:

- A new TechCred Program designed to reimburse employers for training costs for incumbent and prospective employees who earn an industry-recognized credential;
- A new Micro-Credential Assistance Program designed to allow individuals to apply for a grant to help pay for their expenses for training; and
- A new grant program to support industry-led sector partnerships.

Upskilling the incumbent workforce remains one of the biggest challenges for Ohio's manufacturers, as technology continues to advance at a rapid pace. The new TechCred program would allow manufacturers to participate and receive reimbursement as their employees and prospective employees get the training they need to enhance their skills and add to their industry-recognized credentials. Moreover, these credentials provide the employees with a tangible certificate that is recognized throughout the manufacturing sector, making the employee more valued in today's marketplace.

The other key program of HB 2, industry sector partnerships, can play a vital role in supporting the implementation of the TechCred Program via promotion and marketing to

Ohio manufacturers and their partners. Most of the mature industry sector partnerships already have the experience and regional expertise necessary to train individuals and employees more efficiently than companies that go at it alone. The funding provided in HB 2 will allow the partnerships to be instrumental in helping to accomplish the goal of 10,000 micro-credentials per year.

Because of the work of sector partnerships, credentials have become an important tool to translate the common needs of manufacturers to regional education partners. Employers participating in sector partnerships understand the value of a credential when an employee or prospective employee has one.

The OMA appreciates the efforts of Representatives Cross and Lepore-Hagan to advance this legislation. The OMA also recognizes the work of the DeWine administration, and especially Lt. Governor Husted for his leadership on these issues and his support of industry-recognized credentials and industry sector partnerships as solutions to Ohio's workforce dilemma.

Sincerely,



Rob Brundrett
Director, Public Policy Services