



**Representative Stephanie Howse**  
Ohio's 11<sup>th</sup> House District

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Sponsor Testimony for House Bill 222  
House Ways and Means Committee  
October 8, 2019

Good Afternoon Chair Merrin, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Rogers, and members of the Ways and Means Committee. I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on House Bill 222 (HB 222), legislation that will enable Ohio to increase training and professional development opportunities for new truck drivers, in order to address our economy's growing driver shortage.

Over two-thirds of freight is moved throughout the United States by trucks, and the drivers that move freight are a critical part of our country's economy. Although drivers play a key role in our country's economic success, we continue to face a growing workforce shortage due to retirement and a lack of skilled drivers with experience.

The overall economic growth of House District 11 is of utmost priority for me. I serve the most impoverished district in the state, where the average annual household income is \$24,360. In order for a family of three to meet their basic needs for life (housing, food, transportation, childcare, and health care) in Cuyahoga County, the family will need to earn an annual household income of \$40,615. The average truck driver in Ohio makes approximately \$43,680/year. The cost of a Commercial Driver's License training ranges from \$3,000 - \$6,000. The economic reality is that most Ohioans who want to take advantage of the available jobs are not in the financial position to participate in the required training opportunities, without the support of the state of Ohio. My constituents, along with many of your constituents, are the men and women we need to connect to close the labor shortage. In the attachment included in my testimony, each member of the committee will see the average annual household income in your district compared to the basic annual income needed to live in your community. I believe it is our responsibility as legislators, to seek to create opportunities for our constituents to live the Ohio Promise where all Ohioans can live, work and retire right here in our great state.

Under HB 222, employers will be eligible for up to a 50% match of up to \$50,000 in an annual tax credit to train new drivers. The statewide tax credit will be limited to \$3,000,000 per year. Eligible training may include training to obtain a commercial driver's license or on-the-job training. By providing Ohio companies with the resources necessary to connect prospective employees with training opportunities and offering existing employees the opportunity to develop their professional skills, we will be intentionally addressing our economy's growing driver shortage.

HB 222 will help reduce the urgent and growing demand for truck drivers throughout the State of Ohio and will provide both businesses and Ohioans with the support needed to continue to build our economy. Thank you for your time and consideration. We are happy to answer any questions that the committee may have at this time.