



HOUSE BILL 2 - TECHCRED PROGRAM

WRITTEN PROPONENT TESTIMONY

OHIO SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

OCTOBER 1, 2019

Chairman Dolan, Vice-Chair Burke, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Ohio House Finance Committee, I am submitting written testimony on behalf of the nearly 22,000 governing members of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) in Ohio to provide our support for House Bill 2. We commend Representatives Cross and Lepore-Hagan for introducing House Bill 2. Thank you for this opportunity to submit comments

Workforce needs, including both filling open positions and finding skilled workers is our members' top concern. Based upon discussions I have had with members of this committee; I believe you are hearing the same message from employers in your respective legislative districts. House Bill 2 aims to address this concern for employers of all sizes.

House Bill 2 allows employers to seek reimbursement for training existing and potential new employees. As business owners across Ohio struggle to fill vacancies and find skilled workers, this bill empowers employers to front resources so employees can obtain the necessary training, ensuring their skillsets evolve to meet ever-changing demands.

As this committee has heard from the sponsors of the bill, this bill intends to create a simple, streamlined process for businesses seeking reimbursement for training. Candidly, a lot of our members do not access the existing menu of programs as the requirements to do so in some instances are overly cumbersome. Based upon conversations with the sponsors and Lieutenant Governor Jon Husted, who is overseeing implementation of the TechCred Program, the intent is to preserve a simple process by which the smallest of Ohio's businesses may take advantage and be encouraged to utilize. This is done so through a tiered allocation of dollars based upon the number of employees.

We applaud the inclusion of a tiered system so our typical member, who employs 20 or fewer, may be able to receive a portion of the appropriated dollars. In other programs, this has proven challenging for our members. The swallowing up of all available resources by larger companies who may have an employee dedicated to accessing workforce dollars leaves very little left for smaller enterprises. Please remember, a small business owner usually wears many hats. The tiered provision ensures that Ohio's entrepreneurs may access some of these resources.

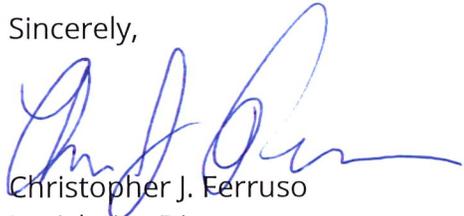
NFIB also supports the Industry Sector Partnership Programs empowering industry-similar businesses, workforce development groups, and educational institutions, through grants, to collaboratively work toward the same goal of simultaneously meeting regional employment needs and building tomorrow's workforce.

We support the TechCred and Industry Sector Partnership Programs. We are pleased the substitute bill no longer mandates an increase in wages to access reimbursement and instead makes it a factor for consideration from the Director of the Development Services Agency. Our members are free-market business owners, and the prior mandated provision may have served as a deterrent to some employers utilizing this program.

With the TechCred program launched through Lt. Gov. Husted's office, the sooner the provisions of House Bill 2 are enacted, the better to ensure employers and their employees can take advantage of opportunities to upskill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our support and comments on House Bill 2. We respectfully ask the committee for favorable recommendation and consideration.

Sincerely,



Christopher J. Ferruso
Legislative Director