



CENTRAL OHIO WORKER CENTER

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2800 South High Street Columbus, OH 43207

Testimony on HB 137 before the Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee

Sarah Ingles, Central Ohio Worker Center

Chair McColley, Vice-Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Antonio, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sarah Ingles and I am the Board President of the Central Ohio Worker Center, a non-profit organization with the mission of advocating for and with low-wage and immigrant workers in Central Ohio. I submit this testimony in support of HB 137 because of the positive impact it would have on workers across the State of Ohio.

HB 137 would guarantee that workers have the means to promptly access and understand how much they are being paid, and whether that payment is in accordance with the law. The bill would require that all Ohio employers provide a pay statement to their workers. This creates paycheck transparency and would make it easier for workers to ensure that they are receiving full wages for the work they have performed.

The Central Ohio Worker Center hosts a monthly wage theft clinic and conducts intakes in between clinics. These clinics serve as locations where low-wage and immigrant workers can come and ask questions about their pay or their rights under the law. Often, it is difficult to understand how a worker is being paid because the worker does not possess a physical paystub that shows the number of hours worked and the amount of money paid for that work. Without a requirement that workers receive a paystub outlining this information, it is easy for workers to go weeks, months, and even years before they realize that they are having their wages stolen and are not being paid the full amount they are owed.

In legal cases where paystubs are not provided by the employer, the burden is put on workers to recall to the best of their ability how many hours they worked and how much they were paid, on a week-to-week basis, for the last two or three years. It is a lot to ask someone who has been working an hourly wage job for a couple years. It is also likely that some time worked or underpaid will be forgotten, causing worker to lose out on what they can and should recover under the law. If they are able to recall the hours they worked and what they were paid, they are then required to prove it in court.

Establishing proof of hours and wages is difficult when you don't have a paystub. Often, it requires court testimony from a person working on the case regarding how the wages and hours worked were calculated. All of the estimates require an explanation of methodology and calculations, which is something that requires many hours of work, by both the worker and the law firm they are working with. Time a worker spends trying to prove their case is not recovered in their lawsuit and is not paid for by their employer. By providing paystubs to workers, time spent figuring out how many hours a worker worked, what they were paid for each of those hours, and how all of that can be proven in court, can be significantly cut down.

Moreover, paystubs may be required for several basic economic endeavors such as renting an apartment or obtaining a mortgage, qualifying for credit, verifying eligibility for certain social programs, understanding tax liability, and understanding the identity of their employer. When workers do not receive a paystub, they face needless difficulties when engaging in our economy. HB 137 guarantees workers the basic right of knowing what they are paid for each hour and how many hours were counted.

I encourage you to advance HB 137 out of committee and help pass it into law. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify in support of this very important bill.