

May 18, 2015

**Testimony -- The Ohio Senate, Finance Subcommittee on Workforce
In Support of H. B. 64**

May 19, 2015

From Tasha Booker, Vice President & Executive Director, City Year Columbus

Hi, Chairman Bill Beagle, Ranking Member Sandra Williams, and the members of the Committee, my name is Tasha Booker and I am the Vice President & Executive Director of City Year Columbus. I want to take a few moments to discuss our support for the telecom language in House Bill 64. I promise to be brief as I know you have a lot of people who want to testify today.

Let me start by telling you a little bit about City Year Columbus. Nearly a quarter of students in Columbus drop out of high school. Students who drop out earn roughly \$1 million less than high school graduates. Furthermore, out-of-school, out-of-work youths collectively cost Americans about \$1.6 trillion in increased social services and lost earnings and taxes over the course of their lifetimes. There is a solution, and City Year is working with students using near-peer mentors in Columbus' most under-served schools to address specific areas that lead to students dropping out. Ultimately, City Year helps close the gap, between what students need to succeed and what schools are designed to provide.

We have a variety of approaches we use with students but I want to discuss one with you today: **Support in math and English:** We work closely with teachers to identify learning gaps and help differentiate instruction for students who need it most through one-on-one tutoring. We also create after school programs that help students succeed in math and English to stay on track and graduate with their peers.

A lot of the work we do with students to support them in math and English focuses on technology, so I'd like to briefly tell you why I believe this proposed legislation will benefit Ohio.

I'm sure you know some of this info from personal experiences as an elected official, but the Internet has dramatically changed society and the way we live and work—creating jobs, driving innovation, connecting us to family and friends, providing news and information and driving advancements in areas such as education and entrepreneurship.

Internet Protocol, or IP based networks have changed how we all communicate. These networks are both wired and wireless and allow a variety of products and services like smartphones, tablets, video chat and others to connect for the benefit of consumers and businesses. At City Year Columbus it is always about access to broadband AND the right devices for the students we work with.

I wanted to share a few real life examples of how IP broadband technologies and services allow students to connect and learn beyond the walls of their classrooms and local libraries:

- First, wireless technologies and services empower students to take advantage of online educational opportunities, including college prep and other specialized classes. City Year uses

this technology to connect us to real-time student level data to help inform the types of interventions we provide to our students. Additionally, technology allows for our Corps members to have access to innovative and interactive academic programs that help engage students beyond books, paper and pencils.

- And, second, communications technologies and services also benefit job seekers everywhere who are going online for training and to earn college credits to enhance their career opportunities.

I believe the telecom language in House Bill 64 will benefit the students that City Year Columbus works with on a daily basis here and elsewhere throughout Ohio.

Thank you for listening to my testimony.