

## **Testimony Supporting HB 551**

Chairman Young, Vice Chair Riedel, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan and members of the Committee, thank you for opportunity to testify in favor of House Bill 551.

My name is Edward Friebel and I am Co-owner of Cooper Enterprises in Shelby Ohio, a contract manufacturer of wood products for industry that has been in business for over 50 years. We are a second generation family business currently and employ 123 people which includes 92 permanent, 13 temps, and 18 seasonal. My father gave four of his children the opportunity to get their first taste of manufacturing at Cooper as early an age as 14 performing simple task such as packing and cleaning. Hours were limited to Saturday mornings. As we became older and able to drive we were given the opportunity to work to a schedule, such as a few hours after school and then 40 hours during the summer when school was out. My brother and I are now partners that own Cooper Enterprises, Inc.

Today Cooper is operating out of a 100,000 square foot facility and leasing another 84,000 square feet. We strongly embrace safety and utilize state of the art equipment to manufacture our customers' goods. As we continue to grow we are faced with the challenge of finding good people. We are finding that even through local high schools are graduating hundreds of potential candidates the very high majority have their next step planned without ever having had the opportunity to experience manufacturing.

Allowing young people to get involved in the manufacturing process at an early age even at the level of sweeping floors, cleaning parts, and other simple task starts to initiate their curiosity is a good practice. They get the opportunity to see the whole process including the challenges. They get to see the different professions, jobs, responsibilities, products, and how their schooling such as math and communication plays important roles. The take away is an experience which is much better than a field trip and can help them to reach a better decision for their future and see opportunities close to home.

Thank You,

Edward A Friebel

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