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**Ohio House of Representatives Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee**

**3-7-18**

**Proponent Testimony / HB 166**

**Testimony of Scott Naill, Adult Division Director, Upper Valley Career Center**

Chairman Duffy, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Sweeney and members of the Ohio House Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee, my name is Scott Naill, Adult Division Director at Upper Valley Career Center located in Piqua in Miami County. It is my honor to be able to testify today with my colleagues in support of House Bill 166. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill, which recognizes (under certain circumstances) Ohio Technical Centers (“OTCs”) as an Institution of Higher Education under Ohio Law. The Upper Valley Adult Division currently serves a four county area which includes Miami, Shelby, Darke, and Clark Counties. I am proud to say I have been in Career Technical Education for over 25 years, starting as a student in high school, a lab instructor for over 25 years, and currently as an administrator of an OTC.

Ohio’s ability to attract and retain jobs is the key to our state’s economic future. It hinges on the educational attainment levels, which is impacted by our ability to produce skilled workers. OTCs are designated by the Ohio Department of Higher Education and provide a host of educational services for adults and businesses. Adults can earn certificates, licenses and other credentials that will assist them in their employment. We build education and training infrastructures that are responsive to the dynamic nature of regional economies and labor markets.

OTCs use state-level data to identify industries with in-demand occupations. We offer programs to address gaps in workforce preparation related to the selected industries and in-

demand occupations. OTCs work closely with local chambers of commerce and local economic development committees to identify trends. We also work closely with local business and industry leaders through organized advisory committees to help identify equipment that must be purchased to support the curriculum and training of the potential workforce. One of the strongest methods OTC's have to connect with the community and the greatest tool we utilize to continually update our programs and meet local workforce demands, is the respective Advisory Committees.

OTCs provide much needed education and training to adult students who are beginning or changing careers, seeking to increase their skills and marketability for a new and in-demand occupation, or have simply been displaced from jobs that no longer exist. OTCs also play a significant role in helping the state reach its "Go Higher" post-secondary attainment goals. Given this significant role in Ohio's statewide educational platform, **OTCs should be recognized as "institutions of higher education" under Ohio law. This designation will remove barriers for collaboration among OTCs, community colleges, and ODHE, and will allow OTCs to access funding and other programs not currently available.** A renewed emphasis on Ohio's technical centers will also help increase student enrollment in certificate/credentialing programs, which in turn will encourage some adults to continue their education at either a two or four year college or university. The recognition of OTC's as "institutions of higher education" will have a direct effect on the quantity and the quality of Ohio's workforce, thus having a positive effect on Ohio's economy.

We also ask that OTC's be included on the State Apprenticeship Expansion Grant that community colleges have available. Although HB 166 does not currently address the Apprenticeship Expansion Grant, we hope we can work with this committee and other legislators to include the grant as part of this bill. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) was awarded \$2 million to fund the College Apprenticeship Consortium project, which will augment the role of state colleges by serving in a non-traditional role as Registered Apprenticeship sponsors in the Advanced Manufacturing and Healthcare sectors. OTCs should be included on these grants, as they are obvious and efficient means to help accomplish the proposed model. The proposed model will offer both individuals and employers an innovative and simplified common point of entry, facilitating access to new career pathways that include

Registered Apprenticeships. OTCs are another viable and credible resource that were overlooked to assist with the College Apprenticeship Consortium project. We would undoubtedly be an asset to the stakeholders already involved.

In conclusion, it is our recommendation that OTC's are recognized as "institutions of higher education" for purposes of certain programs and grant opportunities. Approving House Bill 166 will help meet the demand for a skilled workforce in Ohio and provide Ohio with the tools it needs to grow the economy and attract business and industry. This will not only benefit Ohio, but it will help address the issue of the national "Skills Gap."

Thank you. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.