



**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
PROPONENT TESTIMONY ON H.B. 98**

**Presented on February 28, 2018 by:
Andrea Ashley, Associated General Contractors of Ohio
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Chair Lehner, Vice-Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Senate Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to express the Associated General Contractors of Ohio (AGC) and Ohio Contractor Association's (OCA) support of H.B. 98. Collectively, AGC and OCA represent over 600 union and open shop (non-union) commercial contractors who employ tens of thousands of tradespeople. Our members construct schools, roads, bridges, office and medical complexes, pipelines, wastewater treatment plants, industrial facilities, and many other types of vertical and horizontal structures.

The construction industry is one of many across the state facing workforce concerns. According to a recent survey from AGC of America, nationally 75 percent of contractors plan to expand their headcount this year. And, even as firms expand headcount, an overwhelming majority – 82 percent – expect it will either become harder or remain difficult to recruit and hire qualified workers in 2018, up from 76 percent last year.

To help educate the public about the construction industry and its many careers, AGC of Ohio and OCA have partnered on an iBuildOhio initiative. It includes a website highlighting the many career opportunities in the industry and links to related trade schools, universities and apprenticeship programs; as well as a robust marketing effort that incorporates outreach to schools. H.B. 98 will help our efforts by creating minimum access standards for employers and organizations like ours to present career information to Ohio high school students.



In the past (late 1990's and early 2000's), the construction industry faced challenges getting into schools. Today it is not as much of an issue, thanks in no small part to this legislature's efforts; but H.B. 98 will prevent such situations should they arise. It will ensure organizations have the opportunity to present information about skilled trades to students – a right that currently does not exist in Ohio law. At the same time the bill provides local school districts much flexibility and control over the process.

We appreciate Representatives Duffey and Boggs willingness to introduce the legislation, and urge this committee to favorably report House Bill 98.