

Ohio Senate
Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education
House Bill 49, State Budget

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Chairman Hite, Vice Chair Sykes, and Members of the Committee, my name is Meghan Schmidbauer and I serve as the Assistant Dean of Admissions, International Services, and College Credit Plus at Owens Community College. As part of my role, I work closely with our secondary partners who provide a foundation of career technical training in Northwest Ohio. As such, I have served on the Northwest Ohio Tech Prep Regional Center Steering Committee for nearly four years. I am currently serving as the committee's co-chair. I have witnessed and played a role in the services Tech Prep has provided, and have seen firsthand the success because of their efforts and hard work.

I am here today on behalf of all Ohio career technical students who are supported by Tech Prep pathway services and I appreciate this opportunity to testify on House Bill 49, specifically the elimination of the Tech Prep Expansion Grants under the Career Technical Education Enhancement Line Item 200545.

Tech Prep works with not only the Ohio Department of Education, but also with the Ohio Department of Higher Education. Both entities have the same goal – to provide education to our future workforce, thus resulting in tax paying citizens. Despite having a similar foundation, there are differences between these agencies. Tech Prep works with both ODE and ODHE to ensure students have an easy transition from secondary to post-secondary education. This concept has

been successful for 25 years, earning Ohio Tech Prep national recognition for their collaboration and innovative concepts. During fiscal year 16, Ohio Tech Prep Regional Centers:

- Managed almost 1,700 local college credit articulation agreements
- Engaged more than 10,000 adults and students, focusing on student success and achievement and future workforce needs and demands
- Ensured students are aware of and take advantage of postsecondary credit options
- Developed exemplary Programs of Study to ensure compliance with Federal Perkins funding requirements and processed program approval and program renewal applications

For many years, Tech Prep students have participated in concurrent enrollment opportunities, prior to and now with College Credit Plus at Owens Community College. Since 2014 alone, at Owens, Tech Prep students have earned over 15,000 credit hours. Tech Prep students have a 99% Owens course completion rate. Tech Prep students have saved over \$2.3 million dollars in tuition and fees while at Owens. None of these partnerships and opportunities would exist without the work of our local regional center.

I have spent many hours working with our secondary career technical partners, and with Tech Prep, and helped to create unique opportunities. I have watched students work towards their firefighter certifications at our state of the art facilities in our flashover trailer. I have witnessed high school students mentoring elementary students, igniting the flame of excitement in the STEM fields. I have listened to students who, while in high school, earned their STNA, allowing them to utilize tuition assistance programs from their future employers, rather than using federal aid to pay for college. Students are awarded scholarship dollars for Tech Prep program participation at colleges all around Ohio.

Imagine if you will a machine. Inside the machine, we see three gears, interlocked. We will label the first gear “secondary education.” We will label the second gear “career technical secondary education.” Let us label the third gear “post-secondary education.” Imagine the gears

moving, working together as a team. Now, imagine one gear having to stop suddenly, due to changes in legislation, priorities, and national focuses. The machine has seized, and all the while, the other two gears are trying very hard to move and continue their task. The machine has ceased to function and most likely, will suffer from a mechanical breakdown. Tech Prep is the person who pulls the lever to allow the frozen gear to move once again. They are the go-between that ensures that all of us are focused and working towards the same goal, at all times.

In 2016, the State of Ohio announced the Go Higher Ohio! Initiative. The goal is to bring together education and industry so we may work together to close the gap of Ohioans who do not hold a credential or degree. Based on studies provided by the Ohio Department of Higher Education, Ohio will need to produce an estimated 1.7 million more adults with postsecondary certificates or degrees by the year 2025. Failure to achieve this goal will result in almost 2 million Ohioans underemployed or unemployable. The economic impact to our region, and our state, will be devastating.

Without Tech Prep's support and assistance, we, as a state, will fail to meet this goal. Tech Prep works to align programs and curriculum with workforce needs and demands. We are just gaining the momentum necessary to make a difference. Ohio cannot afford to have an unemployable workforce. At a time where we are working so hard to ensure the future economic stability of our state, the elimination of this funding will result in a negative impact to not just our students but to our businesses and industry partners.

I am asking you to restore the funding for Tech Prep in the biennial budget. As we rapidly approach the mass retirement of skilled workers, we are standing on the precipice of an unimaginable – lack of trained health care workers, electricians, surveyors, accountants, machinists, automotive technicians, and so many more. Your and my future depend on this funding.

I thank you for your consideration of this matter am happy to take any questions.