



**Ohio Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee  
Senate Bill 3 - Proponent Testimony  
Ryan D. Burgess, Director, Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation  
March 14, 2017**

Good morning Chairman LaRose, Vice Chair Kunze, Ranking Member Tavares, and members of the Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee. My name is Ryan Burgess, Director of the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of Senate Bill 3.

Governor Kasich created the Office of Workforce Transformation with the recognition that the state's workforce system has historically been siloed and fragmented. It's our role to coordinate the efforts of the thirteen state agencies and nearly one hundred programs that touch workforce in Ohio.

To ensure the needs of businesses and job-seekers alike are being met, we work with the Governor's Executive Workforce Board, which consists of 23 business, non-profit, labor, and education leaders and four members of the Ohio General Assembly, including Senators Beagle and Williams.

The mission of our office is to grow Ohio's economy by developing a skilled and productive workforce, promoting effective training programs, and connecting Ohio employers with qualified workers.

You have likely heard Governor Kasich talking about autonomous vehicles, predictive analytics, and drone technology and all of these innovations will have a profound and positive impact on Ohio. They will also impact the future of our workforce, our jobs, and the skills needed for those jobs. To keep up with the needs of business in a 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace, Ohio must strengthen its efforts to prepare and continuously retrain Ohioans for the technology-intensive jobs of tomorrow. I want to take a couple minutes to highlight and discuss a few of the proposals in Senate Bill 3:



## **Credit for Work-Based Learning Experiences**

The best way students can learn valuable, real-world skills and “soft skills”, like collaboration and critical thinking, *is to work*. Senate Bill 3 expands current Credit Flexibility law by ensuring all students have the opportunity to receive credit for work experience and building a consistent framework that helps schools provide academic credit for this workplace experience. We already have counties and schools in Ohio that are leading the way in providing students the opportunity to gain real-world experience, like Marietta’s “Building Bridges to Careers”, Federal Hocking Local Schools, and Cristo Rey schools, and we think all students deserve similar opportunities to better understand career pathways and develop the soft skills employers seek.

## **Ohio's In-Demand Jobs Week**

One way to increase awareness of Ohio's In-Demand careers and their pathways is to create an annual “Ohio In-Demand Jobs Week”, held in May. As you will see in the proposed amendment from Senator Beagle, the first annual In-Demand Jobs Week will take place during the first workweek of May 2018. The Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation and state agency partners will collaborate to market Ohio's In-Demand Jobs through career awareness activities and events across the state. These activities will help connect middle and high school students with prospective employers and increase student exposure to in-demand skills and occupations as they prepare to enter the workforce. The potential for Ohio's In-Demand Jobs Week is great and will have a lasting impact for Ohio's students, businesses and local communities.



## **OhioMeansJobs-Readiness Designation**

Months ago, during a local school visit, a high school superintendent told me about all of the college coaches who visited his high school to recruit athletes. After recruitment, there are elaborate national signing days to recognize the student athletes. But, he said, we never have national signing days for students who are ready to work. The proposed OhioMeansJobs-readiness certification is student-driven and will provide well-deserved recognition to students demonstrating the soft skills and job-readiness characteristics that businesses seek. Students will earn the OhioMeansJobs-readiness certification by successfully exhibiting work ethic competencies (such as teamwork, problem-solving, reliability, punctuality, etc.) validated by a student's teachers and/or mentors.

## **Recognized Pre-Apprenticeship Programs – Standard Alignment**

Governor Kasich talks frequently about capturing the imagination of young people and showing them the careers that exist in Ohio's economy. One of the best ways to accomplish this is through a pre-apprenticeship program. Recognized pre-apprenticeship programs provide experience-based learning and create clear pathways to enter the workforce in good paying jobs. The pre-apprenticeship program will also assist businesses in addressing worker shortages in the skilled trades. Students in a recognized pre-apprenticeship program will be able to earn advanced credit and gain direct entry into an adult registered apprenticeship programs. Students will gain up to a year's worth of registered apprenticeship credit and receive a portable completion certificate upon graduation. This proposal aims to shine a light on the value of recognized pre-apprenticeships to students, parents, and businesses.

## **Simultaneous Credit**

Simultaneous credit allows public and private school students to earn academic credit in multiple subjects through cross-disciplinary curriculum integration. For example, a student taking an engineering class also could potentially receive math credit if the engineering course she is taking includes math content that meets academic standards. Credits earned in English language arts, math, science and social studies delivered through integrated academic and career-technical instruction are eligible to meet existing graduation requirements. Integrated instruction breaks down barriers between

academic subjects and career-related coursework and enables students to master content in a way that suits their individual learning styles. It also may give students more time to take college courses, earn industry credentials, participate in apprenticeships and other on-the-job learning experiences, which will help build a stronger, future workforce. The Office of Workforce Transformation will collaborate with the Departments of Education and Higher Education to promote simultaneous credit and provide schools with guidance on implementation.

### **Certificate of Qualification for Employment (CQE) Reform**

With approximately 23,000 ex-offenders leaving our prison system every year, Certificates of Qualification for Employment serve as an avenue to help move individuals back into the workforce. Common Pleas judges issue CQEs, which lift the collateral sanctions that keep individuals who have previous felony or misdemeanor convictions from consideration for employment in a particular field. One current barrier in the Ohio Revised Code for ex-offenders is the wait time that is required before they can apply for a CQE — six months for a misdemeanor and one year for a felony. Senate Bill 3 would change current law to grant the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections with rule-making authority to establish criteria permitting certain offenders who complete rehabilitative programs, such as reintegration units and vocational programs, and have maintained a low security status by allowing them to apply for CQEs with judges immediately upon release from prison. The value is clear; it will help ex-offenders better and more quickly reintegrate into the workforce by allowing them the opportunities to obtain CQEs.

### **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act – Conformity**

In 2014, Congress passed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. To conform with the new federal law, Senate Bill 3 updates state law. Months of discussions have taken place with stakeholders to develop agreed upon language to bring the State of Ohio into conformity with the new standards of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Months of discussion have taken place with key stakeholders, including the County Commissioners' Association of Ohio, the Ohio Workforce Association and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Directors' Association, to develop agreed upon language.



## **STEAM – Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics**

Senate Bill 3 creates a STEAM designation for new or existing STEM schools that want to integrate art and design into the STEM curriculum. By expanding the grades served, students in younger grades will be provided an opportunity to benefit from a STEM or STEAM specialized curriculum. The study of art and design can deepen STEM learning by encouraging critical analysis, problem solving, adaptive thinking and creativity. These skills are essential to higher achievement and success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace. The Department of Education's existing STEM committee will evaluate proposals for the new STEAM designation.

Senate Bill 3 aims to better unite local business and education stakeholders to develop proactive and in-demand education and training programs to prepare young Ohioans for success in their 21<sup>st</sup> century. I have no doubt that this committee shares our objective of increasing collaboration within our communities to ensure bright futures for Ohioans of all ages. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to working with you to move these initiatives forward and welcome any questions you have at this time.