

Goodwill Columbus
House Finance Committee
HB 2
June 11, 2019

Chair Oelslager, Vice Chair Scherer, Ranking Member Cera and members of the House Finance Committee, I am Jennifer Marshall, Senior Vice President Mission Impact and Strategy at Goodwill Columbus. I am also a member of the Ohio Association of Goodwill Industries and represent our network.

Thank you for allowing me to speak with you today about HB 2 TechCred and MicroCredential Assistance Programs.

Goodwill was founded more than 100 years ago by Rev. Edgar Helms, who created what might have been the very first workforce development program. He saw that impoverished individuals in his Boston community needed employable skills, so he collected donated goods from his parishioners and created jobs for people to repair and sell those donations. Thus, providing people with training, employment and the dignity of work.

Rev. Helm's legacy continues to this day. Each year, hundreds of people in Central Ohio secure employment with Goodwill's assistance. Each one of these individuals face barriers to employment, and often multiple barriers; many have disabilities or have lived a lifetime in poverty. Goodwill is a partner and service provider at Ohio Means Jobs-Columbus/Franklin County, and partners with many of the 13 state agencies that administer more than 100 workforce programs in Ohio as we strive to give people a "hand up and not a hand out".

We assist individuals with the opportunity to gain vocational skills and reduce barriers to future employment. Last year in Ohio, Goodwill served over 1,000 individuals, helping them and their families with employment and vocational skill building as well as counseling, case management, adult day services, and other family strengthening activities such as financial coaching.

I am here today in support of House Bill 2 and expanding access to micro-credentials and enabling people to advance in the workforce. Through our experience, we have seen how industry-recognized credentials are a critical piece to move individuals along the pathway to financial independence and economic mobility.

Ohio's economy has been rapidly evolving. In response to these shifts, Goodwill has narrowed our workforce development focus to only offer industry-recognized credentialed training for in-demand jobs in the targeted industries of Healthcare, Information Technology, Hospitality, and Retail.

Access to credentialed training can change a person's trajectory. One of our recent clients, a man in his 20's came to Goodwill after being injured at work in the logistics field. He had been a good employee earning \$12 an hour or about \$25,000 a year. After his injury, he wanted different, less physical work. Through the services of Goodwill, he began training for his Comp

TIA A+ certification. This is an industry-recognized information technology credential program offered at our agency. In a short 16 weeks he was entertaining multiple job offers. In IT, he started out earning \$16 an hour, over \$33,000 per year. This \$8,000 annual difference is meaningful, and his lifetime earnings potential has dramatically increased. He can continue to increase his earnings by completing additional stackable credentials in IT.

Our training programs are accessible, and students are offered wrap around supports like housing assistance, financial coaching, and resource assistance which increases their success. We are also able to provide a variety of scheduling options, low administrative procedures to enroll, and a quick turnaround from start to finish which can be essential to success because most individuals that we serve need to access training and secure employment in a matter of weeks. They often cannot afford college or have the luxury to wait for the next enrollment cycle.

We encourage our participants to view micro-credentials as the first big step on an educational ladder that will build skills and increase earnings. At Goodwill, we work in partnership with local educational institutions and where possible create matriculation agreements so that our participants can earn college credit for their education and credential attainment. This removes obstacles for many low-income individuals because often these types of credentials are not covered by financial aid.

We support House Bill 2 and expanding access to micro-credentials and believe that the TechCred and the Individual MicroCredential Assistance Program programs can truly change lives. We applaud the amendments to House Bill 2 to acknowledge the base of expertise that community-based organizations contribute to solving workforce problems and to ensure that all people can easily access these programs in their community.

Thank you for your considering in investment in building the skills of Ohioans. I will be happy to take any questions.

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