



# Goodwill

Ohio Valley Goodwill Industries  
EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING CENTER

June 2, 2020

Chairman Merrin, Vice Chair La Re, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide written testimony regarding House Bill 614.

As a member of Goodwill Industries International, we are a part of the world's largest and most successful network providing employment and training services for people with disabilities and other barriers to employment.

Ohio Valley Goodwill Industries was founded in 1916 and is one of the largest providers of rehabilitation services in the State of Ohio. The total number of individuals served in 2019 was 3389 and total placed in community employment was 877. We served 693 Veterans in 2019 and recycled more than 52,835,870 lbs. of donated material as well as cardboard, steel and office paper.

The amount of government assistance that was saved was \$6,751,168 and the total economic impact was \$69,716,075.

We recognize that our staff are a critical component of our success. As a result, the organization has policies and procedures in place to make every effort to retain staff; the organization rarely experiences any lay off situations. As a result, the organization is self-insured for unemployment for a saving of approximately \$170,000 per year. This allows us to subsidize our rehabilitation programs to assist an increasing number of individuals served and placed into competitive integrated employment each year.

The current COVID 19 pandemic has dramatically changed the landscape of our organization as it has with all other employers. As the result of mandatory closures, our organization was forced to lay off 458 employees and reduce an addition 25 from full time to 20 hours per week. If all of these individuals file for and receive unemployment

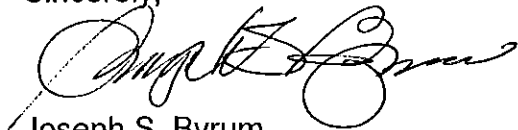
compensation, it will cost the organization approximately \$600,000 per month. Our retail stores which generate the revenue to further subsidize the rehabilitation services were closed from 3/12-5/12/2020; as were many of the rehabilitation services themselves resulting in a loss of more than \$5 million dollars in revenue during that same period.

In addition, although we have been receiving bills for unemployment, we know they are not accurate due to the well documented issues within the unemployment system, resulting in significant delays in individuals being able to file for and receive payment. Based on the numbers of individuals the organization was forced to lay off due to the pandemic, we anticipate the bills to increase substantially over the next few months.

We appreciate the 50% credit or reimbursement proposal from Congress and recognize Ohio has financial constraints, but we are respectfully requesting: 1) Clear and timely information from Ohio Jobs and Family Services (ODJFS) regarding what they are doing for reimbursing employers; credit, reimbursement, deferring these bills and if so for how long? 2) Accurate information from ODJFS regarding the amount the organization will actually be required to pay out in unemployment claims in order to make informed future financial decisions and; 3) The formation of a taskforce by the Governor and/or Legislature to find solutions for reimbursing employers facing these huge unemployment claims.

Chairman Merrin and members of the committee, thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony.

Sincerely,



Joseph S. Byrum  
President/CEO  
Ohio Valley Goodwill Industries  
10600 Springfield Pike  
Cincinnati, OH 45215  
(513) 771-4800  
[jbyrum@cincigoodwill.org](mailto:jbyrum@cincigoodwill.org)