

Before the Ohio Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee
Testimony on House Bill 13
November 16, 2020

Chairman Wilson, Vice Chairman McColley, Ranking Minority Member Williams and members of the Ohio Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee:

I am writing to offer proponent testimony on behalf of the the Columbus Partnership in support of the current version of House Bill 13. This important legislation begins to address the gap in high-speed internet services for 300,000 households across the State of Ohio. The issue of broadband access has been a consistent barrier for our state's competitiveness over the past decade, but it has never been more evident than during a pandemic that has transformed the lives of our citizens and workforce.

The Columbus Partnership is a non-profit, membership-based leadership organization of 75 chairpersons, chief executive officers, and senior executives from the region's leading businesses and institutions. Our members include 15 Fortune 1000 CEOs, as well as the leaders of the nation's largest university and world's largest research and development organization. The Partnership's goal is to provide a long-term vision for achieving greater economic prosperity and has positioned Columbus to be one of the strongest environments to attract businesses and investment in the world.

In the year 2020, it is difficult for any business leader to imagine the realization of a vision of prosperity without our state leading in the areas of technology and equity. Businesses and non-profit leaders support an expansion of solutions that would equip our workforce with the tools that are needed for all Ohio families to participate in our state's progress.

The mission of our community's economic development organization, One Columbus, is to lead a comprehensive regional growth strategy that develops and attracts the world's most competitive companies, grows a highly adaptive workforce, prepares our communities for the future and inspires corporate, academic and public innovation throughout the 11-county Columbus Region. Access to high-speed internet will propel our aspiration to create growth that is rooted in prosperity and allow more people in our region improve their economic and social well-being.

The Columbus Partnership supports this important legislation because it addresses the call to action for Ohio to compete, innovate and meet the technological opportunities of the 21st century. We look forward to all levels of government working together with the private sector to identify technological solutions, like those proposed in House Bill 13, that encourage economic growth and will uplift many Ohioans in the years to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Alex R. Fischer
President and CEO

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