



Ohio Senate | Finance Committee

October 8, 2019

HB 2: Create TechCred & Microcredential Assistance Program

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Burke, Ranking Member Sykes, and Members of the Committee:

Background and Statement of Interest:

Ohio Jewish Communities serves as the statewide government advocacy, public affairs, and community outreach voice of Ohio's eight Jewish federations. Jewish federations are the centralized communal hubs of cradle-to-grave social services, to Jews and non-Jews alike. Jewish refers to our values, not our clients. These services include early childhood, K-12 schooling, college and university campus efforts, independent and assisted senior housing, skilled nursing, rehabilitation, hospice, and, most relevant here, workforce development, vocational training, and job placement, often to individuals or populations with specific needs or difficulties.

We are grateful to the sponsors, Rep. Cross and Rep. Lepore-Hagan, as well as the cosponsors, for bringing needed attention, and a solution, to this issue.

Jewish Community Success with Such Programs:

HB 2, and its focus on certificates and microcredentials, is an answer to a modern challenge. Often, those most in need of training are either underemployed or unemployed but who do not have the time or the financial ability to "go back to school." Community partner agencies within the Federation network now provide short-term training of just a few months, or on-the-job training of up to one year for clients just like these. Still, the need increases.

Appropriately Focused:

We believe funding to both organizations as well as to individuals to help train for in-demand jobs is a focused way to meet current and projected workforce challenges for both employees and their employers.

Conclusion and Next Steps:

It is also, fundamentally, a fulfillment of a key value. Maimonides, a great medieval Jewish scholar, lists several levels of *tzedaka*, a Hebrew term we clumsily translate as charity. It is much more akin to the Hebrew word for justice, i.e., doing what is right.

The highest level of all according to Maimonides is to either give a person a loan so they can succeed in business or to teach them a trade. This legislation meets both these criteria.

We recommend its passage. Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions.

Howie Beigelman, *Executive Director*

###