

Before the Ohio Senate General Government and Agency Review Committee
Testimony on Senate Bill 334
December 1, 2020

Chairman Schuring, Vice Chairman Rulli, Ranking Minority Member O'Brien and members of the Ohio Senate General Government and Agency Review Committee:

The Columbus Partnership offers our sincere support of Senate Bill 334, which establishes Juneteenth as a legal holiday. It is important for the State of Ohio to acknowledge the freedom, history and culture of June 19, 1865, the day on which the last slaves in the United States were set free in Texas. We applaud the sponsors and co-sponsors of this legislation for their commitment to combatting systemic racism and writing legislation that celebrates this important day in our nation's history.

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. This year, our organization gave our employees the day off on Friday, June 19, to reflect on the sacrifices of those who struggled to make that day possible. This day included a call to pause and consider the continuing struggle our nation and region must confront to end the injustice that faces the Black community. Additionally, many of our member companies gave their employees a paid day off to reflect on this significant moment.

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. This prosperity is the process by which more and more people in our region improve their economic and social well-being. A commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in our workforce for families across the State of Ohio is vitally important for inclusive economic development.

Establishing Juneteenth as a legal paid holiday is one of many steps that the State of Ohio can take to stand in solidarity with Black Americans. The business community will continue to stand with leaders as we all come together to combat racism and stand for justice.

Thank you for your consideration.

Alex R. Fischer
President and CEO

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