



STEM Entrepreneurship & Innovation Program for Students to Help Develop Ohio's Future Workforce

Popularly Known as the “*Believe in Ohio Student STEM Innovation & Scholarship Program*”

Mr. Chairman, Madame Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee. I am here today to provide testimony in support of Amendment HC0880X1 to House Bill 110, which continues funding of the Believe in Ohio Student STEM Innovation and Scholarship program.

My name is Andrew Sauer of Cincinnati. I'm a Group Scientist at The Procter & Gamble Company and a lifelong Ohio resident. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today about the Believe in Ohio program.

It is my conviction that we need to create more opportunities and engagement for STEM and entrepreneurial minded students in Ohio if we wish to retain these individuals and fuel future job growth in Ohio.

- As a high school student, I pursued every STEM extracurricular activity that I could find. The most impactful of these activities were the Science Fairs (Local, District, and State Science Days) organized by the Ohio Academy of Science which has an impressive reach, a huge network of dedicated volunteers, and annually awards nearly \$500,000 in scholarships. This is a great model for reaching and engaging STEM-oriented young people, and had a huge impact on me personally.
- I nearly attended an out of state university as I was offered a full ride scholarship to Purdue University with an accompanying internship at Eli Lilly. I would have left Ohio, and probably would not have returned, had it not been for the scholarships I won through Science Fairs, which was a key factor that kept me in Ohio.
- Today I'll tell you that Ohio has much to offer, and I intend to stay here. But in high school, knowing that I would be pursuing a STEM career, Ohio wasn't first on my list of places to live. I went to an academically focused high school where my best friends and I made up 5 of the top 10 students in my graduating class. These are the type of students that we should retain in Ohio, yet all of my friends left for STEM careers outside of the state.
- In my view, our education system today falls short when it comes to developing STEM business leaders and entrepreneurs. There is a real need to encourage STEM-minded students to remain in Ohio, and further develop Ohio as a state where innovation and entrepreneurship thrive. The Believe in Ohio program will engage motivated students, help retain talent and promote innovation and entrepreneurship in Ohio.
- I've judged more than 300 student science fair projects over the past 26 years, and, I feel pretty good that our students are learning core STEM concepts in school. While this is critically important, it's not sufficient.
- In my 3 years of judging the Believe in Ohio competition, I've learned how few students really understand the connection between STEM and entrepreneurship and innovation. This is what the Believe in Ohio program is all about and what it teaches students. The program is very much needed in Ohio, and why I strongly encourage you approve this amendment to the budget.

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