



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. We are 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 Brynn McGrail. *(Brynn McGrail's testimony is shown in black font.)*

And my name is Caylee Combs. *(Caylee Combs' testimony is shown in blue font.)*

We are seniors at Hayes High School in Delaware County. Thank you for the chance to speak about the Believe in Ohio program and our project, which is about a small aquatic plant native to Ohio called duckweed. Duckweed can increase the sustainability of fertilizer and decrease nutrient pollution and algal blooms, which we believe can replace commercial fertilizers to create a more sustainable fertilizer and clean-up nutrient pollution in ponds.

We were first encouraged to enter our project into Believe in Ohio program from the State Science Day competition last spring. Believe in Ohio allowed us to expand on what we had developed for Science Fair.

Believe in Ohio introduced us to business startup plans, operating cost plans, and cost benefit analysis. We had to consider the market involved and who we would sell our product to. We had always considered our project as something that was good for the environment, but we learned that we would not be selling our product to the environment, but rather we would be selling it to people, and, this program taught us how to do that.

We have spoken about the Believe in Ohio program to colleges and scholarship committees across Ohio, and have found them to be impressed with our new found interest in entrepreneurship connected to scientific research.

It changed the way we talked to peers about our project. We have always introduced it as something we were testing, but since Believe in Ohio, we introduce it as something we're creating. People relate to it better because it seems more real. It brings more enthusiasm and curiosity about our project.

Believe in Ohio has encouraged both of us to continue our education in Ohio, as the program strives to show young people like us the importance of our scientific research in our state.

I plan on attending The University of Findlay to study Equine Sciences. After that, I would like to earn my Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine and get my license to practice in Ohio. I also plan on starting my own business selling pharmaceuticals now that this program has sparked my interest in business.

I am attending the University of Cincinnati to study environmental engineering. Following my interests in environmental research, Believe in Ohio introduced me to the next step in commercialization, which helped me find my interest in this school with their co-op program that pushes me to involve my research in the industry.

Believe in Ohio directed our interests in new ways. We will take this experience into our future and hope that future young scientists in Ohio will get this opportunity as well. Please support this amendment to House Bill 110.