



## **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*”**

Chairman Dolan, Ranking Member Sykes, and Members of the Committee. I am offering this written testimony in support of Amendment SC2521X1 to Substitute House Bill 110, “STEM Entrepreneurship and Innovation Program for Students to Help Develop Ohio's Future Workforce”, which continues funding of what is more popularly known as the “Believe in Ohio Student STEM Innovation and Scholarship Program”.

My name is Sheila Cubick. I have been a STEM Advocate with Believe in Ohio since 2014 working with teachers, administrators, and students in a multi-county region of northeast and eastern Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to tell you about my support for the Believe in Ohio program.

One of the most important features of the Believe in Ohio program that I have witnessed over the years is how it educates everyone involved with the program. Teachers who have never explored the impressive entrepreneurial ecosystem in the state, including our award-winning business incubators, learn about the workforce possibilities for their students. Many have expressed the interest and desire to develop an idea that they have had after learning from the Believe in Ohio resources.

Students are educated to think about the world around them as a landscape of possibility and opportunity instead of a place of seemingly unsolvable problems. They become empowered to look at situations and know that with thought, research, and an application of the things they already know from their classes, their own research, and their personal experience and life situation that they can come up with solutions to problems. Some of the solutions may lead to income or help to guide their futures.

The flexibility and adaptability of the Believe in Ohio resources to the wide-ranging interests, concerns, and passions of widely different students from widely different backgrounds attests to its relevance in educating our state's youth. Students with no thought of creating a product or starting a business develop a mindset that allows it to become possible. They may be golfing and want to find their lost ball so design a trackable golf ball. Or maybe break another guitar string while playing so design one from material that is stronger, yet still resonates well. Or they might want to help Veterans who are amputees by creating inexpensive 3-D printed prosthetics. These are examples of some of the ideas developed by students in my region from urban, suburban, and rural schools over the years.

While all students benefit from the process, the jewel of this program is the way it directly rewards students for their creative ideas, research skills, ability to collaborate, and written and oral communication skills. By awarding substantial scholarships that enable them to pursue post-secondary education, students may realize their dreams of a stable and successful career here in Ohio. They may even become the provider of a career opportunity to others in the future.

**On behalf of the students in our state, I strongly urge you to support Amendment SC2521X1 to Substitute House Bill 110 that continues funding of the Believe in Ohio Program.**

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