



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 Rachel Hughes. I am an Engineering Instructor, SkillsUSA Advisor, Makerspace Lab Coordinator, and Grant Writer for Bio-Med Science Academy STEM School in Rootstown, Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to tell you about my support for the Believe in Ohio program.

I have participated in the Believe in Ohio Student STEM Innovation & Scholarship Program multiple times now and have seen students flourish in their engineering skills, creativity, and self-confidence. It is amazing what this program has provided to students and the impact that it is having on students. A student of mine who this year said that “being able to incorporate your interest into schoolwork made this project enjoyable because you had the freedom of the design and concepts. This project has helped me develop my problem-solving skills which I will need in the future.” The program is very organized, provides numerous useful resources for students, and offers great incentives, such as local cash awards and scholarship money to students. The program provides a great opportunity for students to collaborate and apply real-world scenarios to learning, which is what makes learning meaningful. The program provides challenges for students where “grit” is developed, and perseverance is necessary. Not only are academic skills being developed, but necessary characteristics to become a successful person in the workforce and society are being fostered. Without the Believe in Ohio Student STEM Innovation and Scholarship Program, it is nearly impossible for a teacher to implement such a robust, meaningful experience to students due to the already in place demand of teaching their assigned subject with its own standards that they are required to teach. This program, being fully developed and supported, creates an easy way to implement into the school day.

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

Sincerely,

Rachel Hughes
Bio-Med Science Academy STEM School

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