



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 Thomas Slaven. I am a science teacher at Canfield High School in Canfield, Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to tell you about my support for the Believe in Ohio program, how it has had a positive impact on my students and how it has become an important part of the curriculum at our school.

I have had the fortunate opportunity to work in both a career/technical setting teaching Biotechnology and a traditional high school teaching Biology and Chemistry. In my courses, Believe in Ohio was introduced as part of the curriculum. The opportunity for students to do real science and focus on a topic of interest has had a profound effect on the students in these classes. A current student stated that, “the opportunity to get the chance to be a real scientist has been the best experience in my school career”. Another student stated that the project has “made me more excited to come to school”. At the career center, Believe in Ohio became a major part of the Biotech program and helped in recruiting students. It was exciting to see more students pursue technical education and develop enough interest in STEM to dedicated two years to intensive study of biology and chemistry for the chance to develop their project. At Canfield High School, students have requested the creation of additional science electives to allow them to participate in the Believe in Ohio Program. This in turn has led to more students taking additional STEM courses their senior year and gaining an interest in research.

I am also an adjunct professor for Youngstown State University in STEM College and for Mercy College of Ohio in the SciMatics department. Prior to teaching, I was involved in research at Case Western Reserve University and The Ohio State University. These experiences have given me an opportunity to see the need for qualified individuals in the STEM field. Unfortunately, I have also witnessed the loss of talented students to other states. The Believe in Ohio program allows students to see that Ohio is a fertile environment for research and entrepreneurship.

The Believe in Ohio Program has been instrumental in getting students excited about STEM. Some students that were not considering majoring in a STEM field prior to completing their projects later decided to explore these majors once they enter college. Many colleagues report students excitedly talking about their projects and the opportunity to work with local businesses and universities in the development of their ideas. Many of these interactions have convinced students to stay in Ohio for college. One of my former students actually continued her project with a professor once she entered college.

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

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