



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 Pamela Wilson. I am a Believe in Ohio Advocate for SE Ohio. I am currently employed at Ohio University as a Research Associate. I have a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education (I was previously a certified K-8 teacher); I have an MBA and over 20 years in business and technology – recently retired from IBM, and I hold a PhD in Higher Education. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you about the benefits of the Believe in Ohio STEM program.

The STEM and entrepreneurial concepts on which the Believe in Ohio curriculum and framework are based provide teachers and students with the materials needed to develop strong problem-solving skills. This past year, in particular, has demonstrated the need for us all to adapt and think in creative ways. This STEM program provides teachers, and independent students, with templates, examples, video inspiration, and clear guidance using the Roadmap that is malleable enough to use in any learning environment – remote, face-to-face, or hybrid. The program is designed to allow flexibility to meet the needs of the individual student, school, and community. The program can be used as a Capstone project, independent study, or integrated into the business or science curriculum. Teachers have indicated that they appreciate the ability to provide cash awards for local competitions, as well as the potential for Ohio scholarship dollars which encourages Ohio's talent to stay here for their post-secondary education.

With the addition this year of the professional development offered in Google Classroom, earning free contact hours or reimbursable college credit, the program further supported teachers in enhancing their own skills. The PD provided a mechanism to understand the program, review the resources available, and develop a plan for implementation in the classroom in a way that benefited the teacher.

My experience in education and business has demonstrated to me the importance of providing resources such as the Believe in Ohio program to our teachers and students. Business requires the ability to research a problem and develop a solution that can work. This curriculum can be used to benefit students in any district in the state. In southeast Ohio, many rural districts have resource challenges; this free program allows them to offer their students an excellent STEM and entrepreneurial experience.

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

Sincerely,
Pamela Wilson
May 17, 2021