



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 Snehal Choudhury. I am a junior at Jackson High School in Stark County. Thank you for providing me the opportunity to speak about the Believe in Ohio program and why I support it.

I was first introduced to this program at last year's State Science Day. I had done a project creating an alcohol-free alternative to the conventional hand sanitizer. My goal was to address the problems associated with maintaining good hand hygiene, such as water scarcity and alcohol-induced skin dryness.

While I love doing science fair and my goal is to learn science, it was frustrating to see that sports achievements always received more recognition than the work I did for my science project. But with the Believe in Ohio Program, my scientific work got highlighted, and people had a genuine interest in my sanitizer. It gave me so much confidence and made me realize that my passion for science was valid. I was really struggling to find a local community (except for a couple people) who supported my scientific aspirations and dreams. This program allowed me to take comfort in knowing that there is a growing scientific community in Ohio willing to support people who are passionate about STEM.

Before I took part in the Believe in Ohio Program, I didn't see the connection between STEM and entrepreneurship. Specifically, it taught me a lot about how to bring something new to the market, generate revenue, lower production costs, and have a clear business plan, amongst other economic concepts. More importantly, it made me see how relevant my product was in solving a real-world problem and how I could sell this product to help many people if I continued to pursue this project. In general, the Believe in Ohio Program showed me how I could apply STEM concepts to the real world, which I had trouble seeing before.

The Believe in Ohio program is very valuable in developing future young scientists. For someone like me, I really appreciated how accessible this program was to so many people in so many places, urban or rural. Because of the Believe in Ohio and scholarship program, I am considering studying engineering in an Ohio institution. I truly believe that it's important that we continue to grow this program to benefit more students and promote science.

On behalf of all the future scientists, I urge you to support Amendment SC2521X1 to Substitute House Bill 110 which continues funding of the Believe in Ohio Program.

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