

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 popularly known as the "Believe in Ohio Student STEM Innovation and Scholarship Program".

Witness Testimony: Believe in Ohio is a fantastic program and critically important to the economic future of the state. U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statics forecasts an additional one million jobs related to STEM by 2022. And because half of these jobs will not require a bachelor's degree, proficiency in STEM should be reimagined and understood as fundamental to the education of ALL students regardless of post-high school trajectories. STEM occupations have average wages nearly double the national average and Ohio STEM-skilled students find themselves in high demand in literally all job sectors. The Believe in Ohio program is exceptionally effective at providing students with a guided experience that prepares them for a STEM-centric economy and aims to ensure that Ohio workers and businesses can remain competitive in an increasingly innovation-driven marketplace. I offer my full support for a continuation of funding for this critical program.

Witness Bio: Dr. Jacob White joined the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs in 2020 as Senior Executive in Residence for Education and Evaluation. Jacob supports the School's Planning, Evaluation, Education, and Research (PEER) team by providing strategic leadership in two key areas: the design and implementation of evaluation projects for public and non-profit organizations, and education initiatives that impact local communities and the broader Appalachian region.

Before joining the Voinovich School, Jacob served as Professor of Chemistry at the University of Rio Grande (URG) with fifteen years of college teaching experience and a record of scholarship in educational research and outreach. Most of his scholarly interests have focused on STEM education, including professional development for in-service science teachers, STEM education research in rural settings, and research in curricular and pedagogical concerns inherent to the high school-to-college transition in STEM education. He has written and secured nearly \$3,000,000 in competitive grant funding to support these initiatives, most of which has provided training and classroom equipment for K-12 science teachers from the underserved Appalachian region.

Jacob's work has been published in various academic journals in the fields of chemical education, STEM education, teacher preparation, and environmental chemistry. He has served in various university leadership roles, including as Associated Director of the Southeast Ohio Center for Excellence in Mathematics and Science, president of the faculty union, lead negotiator for collective bargaining agreements, chair of the tenure and evaluation committee, and interim grants director. Jacob was the 2011 recipient of the Edwin Jones Teaching Award from URG, and the 2005 recipient of the Donald R. Clippinger Research Award from Ohio University. Jacob has a Ph.D. in Chemistry (Analytical) from Ohio University.

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