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Ohio Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee  
Hearing on Senate Bill 178 (Dept. of Education & Workforce)  
Interested Party - Testimony of The Ohio Workforce Association

December 5, 2022

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Ohio Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony as an interested party on SB 178—legislation that proposes restructuring the Ohio Department of Education. We submit this interested party testimony on behalf of the Ohio Workforce Association (OWA) membership. With that said, at this time, please note that the OWA is not taking a position on the state board of education restructuring – we are offering this testimony only as it relates to workforce provisions in the bill.

The OWA represents and offers supports to 20 local Workforce Development Boards across Ohio. There are 245 local businesses represented across these Boards, as well as 28 Business Organizations and more than 40 labor representatives. The following are the largest business sectors that are represented on our Boards:

- 62 Manufacturing
- 31 Business Services
- 30 Financial Services
- 29 Healthcare
- 25 Construction and Skilled Trade Companies

Our workforce system utilizes OhioMeansJobs Centers in all 88 counties to assist both job-seekers and businesses. Through our Boards and these Centers, we are the state’s “boots on the ground” in convening and connecting all things related to workforce development. This includes local workforce development board partnerships with K-12 and higher education. Workforce Boards are the expert source of labor market information on in demand occupations and growth industries for each of Ohio’s economic regions. The boards’ daily interaction with businesses sourcing talent informs a real time knowledge of career opportunities that should be shared with students. We support a focus on career awareness and career exploration and we hope that through efforts like SB 178, strong connections are encouraged between the K-12 system and the local workforce development boards.

Thank you for considering this important legislation and recognizing the importance of the educational development of Ohio’s young talent. OWA would be happy to address any questions at the committee’s convenience, and to serve as a resource for any considerations that are workforce-related in the bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jennifer M. Meek Eells".

Jennifer M. Meek Eells, Executive Director  
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