



**BEFORE THE ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
THE OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
REPRESENTATIVE D.J. SWEARINGEN, CHAIR**

**HOUSE BILL 3
TESTIMONY OF ANN AQUILLO
THE OHIO MANUFACTURERS' ASSOCIATION**

March 14, 2023

Chairman Swearingen, Vice Chairman Santucci, Ranking Member Upchurch, and members of the House Workforce and Economic Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 3.

My name is Ann Aquillo, and I here today representing The Ohio Manufacturers' Association (OMA). Created in 1910 to advocate for Ohio's manufacturers, the OMA today has approximately 1,300 members statewide. Its mission is to protect and grow Ohio manufacturing.

A top issue facing employers today can be summed up in one word: workforce. The workforce challenge is especially daunting for Ohio manufacturers.

As you may know, manufacturing is the largest of the state's 20 industry sectors. In 2021, manufacturing contributed \$118 billion to Ohio's economy, accounting for nearly one-fifth of Ohio's private industry GDP.

Manufacturing also pays the highest total wages of any Ohio industry sector, with an annual payroll of \$42 billion, employing more than 670,000 Ohio workers.

Needless to say, Ohio's economy is directly tied to manufacturing. To continue Ohio's legacy as a manufacturing powerhouse, we need creative public policies that grow and retain a capable workforce.

As an industry, manufacturers and their stakeholders have led the way in innovation to solve their talent challenges. We have embraced forward-thinking strategies, including industry sector partnerships, credentialing programs like TechCred, adoption of next-generation technology, career-technical education, and earn-and-learn programs.

But these approaches alone will not fix the workforce crisis. More must be done to support efforts to build a robust manufacturing talent pipeline.

Employees and employers have needs beyond training opportunities. One of those critical needs is affordable housing. With a shortage of new housing construction in conjunction with rising housing prices, workforce housing is in short supply. If employees are unable to find a suitable, affordable home for their families, job openings go unfilled.

House Bill 3 would leverage an existing federal housing tax credit, the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, and draw federal resources to help meet affordable housing needs. Through the enactment of a state affordable housing tax, House Bill 3 aims to address the mismatch between housing supply and demand, while incentivizing developers to build affordable units.

House Bill 3 would add another resource to Ohio's workforce arsenal since employees benefit from thriving communities that offer a variety of housing options across the income spectrum. Stable housing contributes to a stable workforce. While House Bill 3 will not address all of Ohio's housing needs, it can and should be part of the solution.

Thank you, Chairman, and members of the committee for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 3. I am happy to answer any questions.