

April 12, 2023

Chair Edwards, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Sweeney, and other distinguished members of the House of Representatives:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill 33 requesting the House Finance Committee support \$3 million in funding in the FY 24 -25 Ohio operating budget to expand workforce development, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship programming to Ohio students.

Junior Achievement has been a partner with me in my classroom for more than a decade and a very impactful part of my students' learning experience. With JA, my students have had the opportunity to have a life-changing educational experience. Yes, Junior Achievement is life-changing for students. The JA Company Program, in particular, has been especially impactful as it immerses students into the real world and challenges student teams to launch and operate a real business. Junior Achievement provides the programming, a business volunteer, and funding for this program, along with teacher support, training, and mentoring.

As a teacher, I have been privileged to watch students develop ideas that solve real problems like teen loneliness and social media addiction, age-related cognitive decline, financial literacy education, and many more. The students who set out to solve these problems developed innovative products and learned to manage a growing business as part of a team while taking a percentage of the profits and investing back into their communities. This experience teaches them how to run a business and instills in them the values of hard work, responsibility, and teamwork. These skills stay with them long after their high school experience ends. Many students point to the JA Company Program as the most memorable and impactful experience they had during their entire educational experience.

The impact of Junior Achievement on students cannot be overstated. The program provides a practical and real-life experience that prepares students for success outside of the classroom. This experience is particularly valuable for students pursuing business, finance, or entrepreneurship careers, but the skills can be applied to almost any future education or work experience. Additionally, Junior Achievement programs help students develop soft skills such as communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking, essential for success in any field. Junior Achievement students are more ready for success in our fast-paced, rapidly changing world.

All students should experience finance, entrepreneurship, and work readiness programming in school because it gives them the tools and knowledge necessary to succeed after high school, whether they plan to attend college or enter the workforce. These skills are crucial for success in the 21st century, where innovation, creativity, and teamwork are highly valued. Please consider providing Junior Achievement with the necessary resources to bring this life-changing educational experience to more Ohio students.

Thank you for your support.

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