



Sponsor Testimony: House Bill 71

Representative Nick Santucci, 64th House District

House Finance Committee

Chairman Edwards, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today on the Community Connectors Workforce Program, House Bill 71.

Workforce preparedness is an essential quality for a student to have following their graduation from high school in order for them to find professional success. Soft skills have been identified as an area in which many students need improvement when they enter into the workforce for the first time. The Community Connectors Workforce Program addresses this deficiency by creating an emphasis on soft skill training, helping students to be better prepared to succeed over the course of their professional career.

Society has seen consistent patterns of young adults struggling to find employment. The Community Connectors Workforce Program attempts to address this pattern by encouraging young adults to work so that they can gain valuable experience and enter the workforce as a more qualified candidate for employment. By partnering with educational service centers, this program revives the structure of the Community Connectors Grant program. It will be administered by the Department of Education and will provide for an on-site director to be present in high schools throughout Ohio.

The role of the Community Connectors Workforce Program will be to identify available jobs and to prepare students to enter the workforce while simultaneously helping employers to fill their workforce needs. Businesses and other employers will be connected with students who will work in their companies to gain professional work experience. This program will work with OhioMeansJobs and community partners to fill available jobs and internships while complying with applicable minor laws prescribed under section 4109.02 of the Revised Code.

Chairman Edwards, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you again for giving me an opportunity to speak with you today about House Bill 71. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.