

HB 432 Opponent Witness Testimony

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Thank you, committee members, for the opportunity to share my insight and experiences today regarding House Bill 432 which will significantly alter the credentialing process of new career technical educators in Ohio. I am a career technical educator. However, I still wear my business professional hat. As many CTE teachers, I didn't go to school initially to be a teacher. I earned a BS in Business Administration from Miami University (Oxford, Ohio). My first job was with Accenture, a global professional services firm, and from there I spent the next 12 years working in Cleveland-based digital marketing firms and became the director of marketing before becoming a marketing teacher at Bedford High School. You should know my both my undergraduate education and on-the-job training was amongst the best in the world for business and marketing. I needed that degree from Miami to get my first job and it has helped me on every job since. I love efficiency and loath bureaucracy. In most matters, this panel and I would be quite aligned with policy views.

I now have the privilege of working with new CTE teachers at Kent State University. I am here representing my own experiences. I spend a lot of time in these new teachers' classrooms equipping them and mentoring them. I also spend time with their administrators helping them navigate the complexities of career technical education. Being a CTE teacher is hard work. We not only teach technical acumen, we teach academic and literacy skills, 21st century professional and global competency skills. We provide our students with work-based learning opportunities, help them pass webxams, compete in their student organizations, earn credentials and college credit, and work with our advisory committee members to help our students find employment. These are some of the complexities that are supported by the staff at the university every single day. Our faculty members are current and past CTE instructors passionate about helping teachers be the best teacher - not just a licensed professional.

I have significant concerns about the proposed changes in HB 432. Fundamentally, the proposed changes do not streamline the process for credentialing, instead, it adds layers of additional complexities to local districts, reduces the accountability provided by higher education, and it will lead to reduced credible training for CTE teachers.

HB 432 raises more concerns than it does to provide solutions to reduce the complexity of CTE teacher recruitment and training. Please talk to local administrators who will be responsible for 45 hours of professional development, 90 hours mentoring programs, competency-based self-assessments, and 9 credit hours. We have, and they have enough on their plates. How can a new teacher, who doesn't know what they don't know, develop a personal learning plan? How is the revised plan going to tackle literacy standards? This is already built into our teacher preparation program at Kent State, and we continue to evolve and capture student feedback to improve their educational experiences. Our students have seasoned mentors, come together for networking and knowledge sharing, and are equipped with strategies for the classroom. We instruct them on literacy tactics built on CTE programming. We help them build their local student organizations, and they walk away with practical deliverables for their student populations.

To circle back, I was hired in July 2013 and was in the classroom in August. Had it not been for the exceptional training, support, and networking I received from Kent State University, I wouldn't have lasted through my first year of teaching despite the amazing credentials I brought with me. I definitely would not have become Ohio Department of Education Rookie Teacher of the Year in 2017 or Bedford City School District Teacher of the Year in 2019. When I started teaching, my assigned mentor from my district was an English teacher two hallways away from me. My Kent State mentor was a seasoned CTE teacher who taught me the ropes. I never received CTE professional development during my tenure at Bedford High. In contrast, every class I took at Kent was about the program I was building. It was the instructors at Kent who told me I needed to run DECA to be state and Perkins funding compliant. (A conversation I frequently have with new teachers now). It was my cohort of new CTE teachers at Kent State who shared lesson plans and strategies with me. Ultimately, it was through Kent State that I earned my Master's in Education and began the pursuit of excellence in propelling career technical education as a discipline. I am a teacher, just like the math and science teacher, largely in part because I received comparable educational experiences at the university level - just like when I got my business degree. CTE teachers are real teachers. CTE students are real students. They need training and support that reflects the challenging job they have.

I would be happy to work with you and champion CTE education in our state and share the exciting initiatives we have taken to support our Kent State teachers for life. I will end with this simple quote from a real student.

"I like the way Mrs. Kirin teaches, she explains everything well and I am able to understand, retain, and utilize what she teaches." (Evaluations Class Student, April 8, 2024).

That's what we do for our students at Kent State.

I am happy to provide additional pieces of evidence.

"I believe this class was so beneficial as far as resources and information. I learned so much about CBI, what it is and the resources available to me."
(Disadvantaged Youth Course Student, April 2024).

"I really enjoyed the structure of this class and how we had some whole-group time and also some breakout group time. I feel I took a lot away from the discussions today!" (Evaluations Student, February 2024).

"I really enjoyed the breakout sessions and the slides presentation that accompanied today's meeting. It's nice to see everyone and hear their stories." (Issues In CTE student, January 2024).

"All the resources and information you have given us have been helpful and useful in the classroom. Thank You!" (Leadership in CTE student, September 2023)

"Thank you for your time and effort. I appreciate how engaging you make your courses." (Leadership in CTE student, October 2023)

"I'm proud of myself for growing so much this last year. I'm proud of how less anxious I am this year." (Leadership in CTE student, September 2023)