

May 1, 2023

**Senate Education Committee**

Ohio Statehouse  
1 Capital Square  
Columbus, OH 43215

**Chair Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram, and other distinguished members of the Senate:**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill 33 requesting the Senate Education 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.

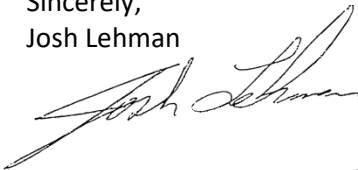
Imagine a world where every student graduates from high school with the knowledge to help them make smart financial decisions, the mindset of an entrepreneur, and the skills they need to thrive in their career. This is why I am writing testimony in support of Junior Achievement's (JA's) request for an appropriation that will allow them to expand the impact of their programming and help more students across Northeast Ohio own their future success.

Since the founding of JA's offices in Northeast Ohio they have impacted the lives of millions of K-12<sup>th</sup> grade students by providing hands-on experiential entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and career readiness programs. National studies on the impact of JA programming on alumni found that students who have JA in school are 143% more likely to start their own business, they earn 20% more than the general population, they pay off student debt and purchase homes sooner than the general population, and 1 in 3 of them credit their JA experience with helping them decide what they wanted to be when they grew up. Combined, these data points paint a picture where small business is thriving, families are earning more money and paying off debts sooner allowing them to invest more in their home and community, and career exploration is leading to the discovery of career passions creating a talent pipeline for the future of our community.

Over the years I have been privileged to see the impact of JA's programming firsthand. I have spoken to many alumni of JA who say that they are business owners, first time college graduates, found their career path, and even met their spouse because of their JA experience. These few stories are but a handful of the millions of students who have had a JA class over the decades. It is because of these stories and the monumental impact that JA had on the lives of these individuals that I support JA's mission and their vision to help young people build a skillset and mindset to create thriving communities.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony in support of the schools and students that Junior Achievement serves each school year.

Sincerely,  
Josh Lehman



*COO, Junior Achievement of North Central Ohio*

**Email:** [joshua.lehman@ja.org](mailto:joshua.lehman@ja.org)

**Home Address:** 108 Keywood Blvd, LaGrange, Ohio 44050