

To: The Ohio Senate Education Committee and Members of the Primary and Secondary Education Committee

I would like to thank House Members for the opportunity to submit a testimony against HB 432. I am aware that the intent of Senate Bill 432 is to ease the critical shortage of career and technical education (CTE) teachers in our education system. However, at a time when there is an added emphasis on workforce development, this bill, if passed as currently written, will have negative consequences for career and technical education teachers, students, and the Ohio workforce. I am opposed to the bill for three reasons: i) undermining the quality of CTE teachers, ii) shortage of mentors for CTE teachers, and iii) lack of clarity meeting the reading and writing requirement for the CTE license.

While CTE teachers are critical for successful workforce development because they equip students with practical skills for the workforce, this bill overlooks the importance of well-prepared teachers. These teachers need a diverse set of skills and industry knowledge to carry out their various responsibilities and maintain a high professional profile (Tanaka *at al*, 2023). In addition to knowledge and skills of their trades, CTE teachers are expected to teach essential employability skills such as communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and critical thinking (Waddell, 2024). These skills are highly valued by employers and are essential for success in any career field. Unfortunately, in the absence of a robust teacher preparation program, where the teachers learn how to teach their trades and develop workplace skills, HB 432 undermines the quality of CTE teachers and thus sets them up to fail. Furthermore, the proposed bill will require CTE teachers to take 9-hrs of college credit, and if they are not required to take these courses in career and technical education, the teachers may struggle to teach their trade and employability skills.

In Option C, HB 432 expects school districts to provide mentoring opportunities for CTE teachers. Career and technical education programs, as outlined in the Perkins Act, unlike academic subjects, are made up of several components which even an experienced academic teacher may not be familiar with. There are not enough experienced CTE teachers, across trade areas, within school districts to mentor new teachers. Universities have provided this mentoring through the teacher education programs, and I foresee this being a challenge for many school districts.

Just like other education licenses in Ohio, one of the requirements for CTE teachers is to take a 3-hour Reading in the Content Area. For school districts that opt for non-college credit, how will they ensure CTE teachers have the reading and writing competencies? And for the school districts selecting the college credit option, is this requirement part of the 9-hrs of college credit or will it be additional coursework?

While I acknowledge the challenges school districts face in finding CTE instructors, I think HB432 will lead to underprepared CTE teachers, shortage of mentoring opportunities, and issues regarding meeting the reading and writing requirement for the CTE licensure. Having trade skills does not equate to teaching the trade effectively. In my view, CTE teachers deserve both sound pedagogy and trade skills to be effective in the classroom. Thank you.

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