

April 25, 2023

Senate Finance Committee

Ohio Statehouse
1 Capital Square
Columbus, OH 43215

Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes, Senator Brenner, and other distinguished members of the Senate:

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

Twenty-one years ago, I was an 18-year-old senior just weeks away from high school graduation. Many would agree that this is one of the most exciting times in a young person's life. For me, it was one of the scariest. As I sit back and think about my career journey post-high school, I can't help to think how differently my chosen path would have been, had I been given the opportunity to explore career pathways and financial literacy education through Junior Achievement programs. It's evident to me that I wouldn't have changed my major four times, and I certainly wouldn't have spent so much time and money trying to figure out what the future could offer me. As I mentor students today through my employment at Junior Achievement, I emphasize my story in hopes that they will begin to find their passion through career exploration programs at a much earlier age.

Junior Achievement gives students the skillset and mindset they need to build thriving communities. We do this through hands-on programs that focus on entrepreneurship, work readiness and financial literacy; all vital pillars for the next steps in one's journey after graduation. Our programs allow students to find their passion in life. I often share with students it's not about chasing after the money that makes life worthwhile, it's about chasing after their dream. Junior Achievement's programs and its mentors gives K-12th grade students the opportunity to start exploring their dreams at an early age and throughout multiple touchpoints during their educational journey.

Most recently, high school students throughout our service footprint were given the opportunity to explore career pathways by participating in our JA Inspire to Hire events. These events gave students the opportunity to engage in interactive, hands-on activities that allowed students to discover their passions and interests whether that might be enrolling in a post-secondary institution, entering the workforce, enlisting in the armed forces, discovering their love for entrepreneurship and so much more. The event truly inspired students to plan their next steps. Charles River Laboratories in Ashland County (among many others) believed in our JA Inspire vision and because of their partnership, we are now connecting high school seniors to internship, job shadow and employment opportunities within their organization.

Junior Achievement is changing lives because of the collaborative support of our schools, businesses, and communities. I encourage you to come alongside our team at JA and support our mission, allowing us to positively impact more and more students in the future.



Regards,

Holly Dawson

Holly Dawson

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