

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.

My name is Jesse Halmasy, CEO of 2022 Junior Achievement (JA) USA Company of the Year Brain Wave, JA Alum & Freshman at Kent State University.

My parents always told me, “You do not have to have it all figured out, you're just in high school.” Which, of course, they were right; but with all the different options, I wanted to know what I wanted to be when I grew up. Thankfully my school had incredible career tech programs. I took a lot of them like construction, graphic design, and culinary. The problem was that while I liked them all and was happy to have increased my skill set, I was nowhere closer to finding out what I wanted to be. Fortunately, there was one last program I had not taken but was really looking forward to; the company business program. I found out about this program my freshman year as I watched the seniors start and run companies. It was incredible that students had this opportunity while still being a high school student. They even got to compete for a chance to be named the “Company of The Year,” a national honor; that year a team from my school did, and from that moment I knew I wanted to win it, too.

A few years go by and I am finally a senior in the class I had been waiting to take. At the beginning of the year, I was elected CEO and built my company. At this point, this program already felt different than the others. Throughout that year, I designed a product, met with manufacturers, went into sales meetings and delegated and tracked funds – all as a 17-year-old. The year went on with countless ups and downs but ended with a trip to Washington D.C. for the JA Company national competition. When it came down to that final moment of awards, everyone's hearts were in their stomachs waiting to see if all our hard work was about to pay off. When my company, Brain Wave, was announced, I was through the roof. At that moment I realized I was what I was going to be: somebody. Not in the context of “somebody special” but as “someone's gotta do it.” To be somebody, you must start as somebody, and that is the mentality I live by since Junior Achievement.

As a student, I have seen many others who struggle in school and often have no motivation past a certain point. I have seen the company program create passion and give those students (who teachers have written off and say are going nowhere) something to look forward to both in school and in life. Junior Achievement does this for kids of all ages. With their multiple in class program kits, kids in every grade level have the opportunity to learn more about the real world and fiscal responsibilities, keeping them engaged and excited throughout their scholastic and professional careers.



Junior Achievement is more than what is understood as a nonprofit; it is a source of passion and true education. They have given me and many other students opportunities to better prepare themselves for the real issues of life through their pillars of career readiness and financial literacy. To Junior Achievement, tomorrows truly are more important than ever.

Sincerely,

Jesse Halmasy

Jesse Halmasy

CEO, Brain Wave

Email: halmasy.jesse@gmail.com

Home Address: 211 7th St NE, North Canton, Ohio 44720