



February 27, 2024

The Honorable George Lang  
Chairman  
Senate Small Business and Economic Opportunity Committee  
Ohio Statehouse  
1 Capitol Square  
Columbus, OH 43215

**RE: Senate Bill 198 – Written Proponent Testimony**

Dear Chairman Lang:

The Ohio Manufacturers' Association (OMA) appreciates the opportunity to provide this written testimony in support of Senate Bill 198.

The OMA was created in 1910 to advocate for Ohio's manufacturers; today, it has nearly 1,300 members. Its mission is to protect and grow Ohio manufacturing. Manufacturing is the largest of the state's economic sectors. As of Q3 2023, manufacturing contributed more than \$133 billion to Ohio's economy. According to the most recent data, nearly 700,000 Ohioans work in manufacturing, and manufacturing has the largest payroll of any Ohio economic sector.

Our state has seen an unprecedented amount of investment into the manufacturing sector and there is still more to be done in order to address the workforce needs of Ohio's manufacturers. Employers continue to cite talent availability as one of the biggest challenges they currently face. Sustained growth in manufacturing productivity will require efforts to recruit and retain untapped talent populations.

SB 198 would help returning citizens rejoin the workforce by providing them with documentation needed to successfully secure a job, such as a state ID card and vocational training or work records. Employment is the greatest predictor of successful reentry, helping to lower re-arrest and re-incarceration rates for people with past convictions, in turn helping improve the quality of life in Ohio's communities. There are currently many barriers to reentry and this legislation would help returning citizens in their pursuit of employment opportunities.

Ohio manufacturers need public policies that protect the state's manufacturing advantage and addressing workforce challenges is a critical component to the state's business climate. The OMA appreciates your leadership, along with your joint sponsor Senator Manning, in introducing this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lindsey Short".

Lindsey Short  
Director, Public Policy Services  
The Ohio Manufacturers' Association