

Proponent testimony on Senate Bill 82
Senate Ways & Means Committee
Anne Richards, President & CEO
Goodwill of Greater Cleveland
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Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Roegner, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today in support of Senate Bill 82, sponsored by Senators Reynolds and Ingram. My name is Anne Richards, and I am the President and CEO of Goodwill of Greater Cleveland, and the Past President of the Ohio Association of Goodwill Industries.

I am sure many of you know Goodwill for our stores. You know the model; people donate items to us we sell them for a price. Right? That was what I thought before I started working at Goodwill.

Goodwill stores are a means to creating a greater end. In Ohio, there are 16 autonomous Goodwill organizations that cover all 88 counties. Collectively, we employ approximately 7,600 Ohioans with an estimated payroll of \$130 million.

In 2022, Ohio Goodwill's combined to serve 78,000 Ohioans. When I say served, what do I mean? Our organizations have a comprehensive array of employment services including training in digital literacy and certifications for in-demand jobs, programs for the reentry and veteran populations, assessing job skills, assistance writing a resume, and job placements.

We also work with individuals on soft skill training including practicing for an interview, offering guidance on how to dress for an interview, and coaching as individuals begin a new position.

In addition, each Ohio Goodwill organization has a different range of services, such as providing emergency vouchers for individuals facing hardship, offering financial literacy training, operating adult day centers and medical equipment loaner programs. My Goodwill is an actual rape crisis center in three counties.

How do we pay for all this? How did we serve 78,000 people and employ 7,600 Ohioans? Yes, we get some public funding for our programs. However, the far majority, in fact almost all our programs, are not fully funded and some of the programs do not receive public support at all.

So, we pay for these programs and services with our stores. The revenue from the retail stores funds our collective missions, pays our employees, and covers rents, utility bills, etc.



At Greater Cleveland Goodwill, we have 28 programs and none of them are fully funded. We run a community campus where we house 20 other nonprofits. We charge them a reduced rent so they can use their funding for their missions. The campus operates at a \$280,000 annual shortfall, and we make up the difference with our stores.

I ask for your support of Senate Bill 82, which will allow nonprofit organizations that sell donated goods to retain 25% of the state sales tax to be exclusively reinvested into workforce programming for individuals with barriers to employment. Retained funds would help us to expand our current programming and start new programs.

There are several examples of how this funding would be used. Let me give you one: our Goodwill is currently in discussions with sober living facilities in Cleveland. People living in these facilities are in recovery for alcohol and drug addiction. Many of these people struggle to find and/or maintain employment. With this new program, we will provide employment support and placement as well as other wrap around services. As there is zero funding for this program, Goodwill plans to fund it through the revenue from our stores.

Unlike grants, Senate Bill 82 will provide a reliable funding source for our organizations. And not just us, the bill would benefit any nonprofit that sells donated items and offers workforce programs.

I want to close with excerpts from a letter that we received at our Goodwill just last month from someone who graduated from our programming:

Before entering Goodwill's programs, my life was a complete mess. I was on drugs, addicted to Fentanyl, in a toxic relationship and had no self-love or self-respect. I went to Goodwill and met an amazing instructor, took lots of classes and learned more about life than I ever thought I would know. At Goodwill, I found a place where people really cared about me for the first time in my life. I got my first real job at Goodwill. It has now been 18 months that I have been sober. I have a job, my own car and apartment and a great boyfriend. I went back to school and got my GED and now I am enrolled in college. Thanks to Goodwill's program, I have had the help of so many people who actually cared to help me see me for who I truly am... To me, that is the best thing I could ever have.

I would like to thank the bill sponsors, Senators Reynolds and Ingram and a number of others who have signed on as supporters. I ask for your support of Senate Bill 82, which will allow Goodwill and other organizations across the state to make a difference, remove barriers, put people to work and strengthen families and communities. Thank you for allowing me to testify, I am happy to answer any questions you may have.