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February 28, 2023

Senator Jerry Cirino
Chair, Ohio Senate Workforce & Higher Education Committee
1 Capitol Square, 1st Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chair Cirino:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written, proponent testimony on Senate Bill 30, legislation that will allow minors under 16 years old to work until 9 pm on school nights with the permission of a parent or guardian. We appreciate Senator Schaffer's goals of trying to help address the workforce needs facing so many small businesses while also allowing these individuals to gain important life skills and increased earning opportunities.

By way of background, NFIB members come from all industry sectors in all 88 counties across Ohio. Our typical member employs 15 or fewer and has less than \$2 million in gross receipts. The diversity of our membership runs the spectrum of business operations from sole-proprietors operating out of their homes to large manufacturers that employ hundreds.

Our members' inability to fill workplace vacancies has catapulted to a top concern currently facing the success of their businesses. In fact, 45 percent of members report job openings that are hard to fill. This far exceeds the historical average of 22 percent and is close to the record for the 50 years that our research foundation has been asking this question!¹

While Senate Bill 30 will help address some of our members workforce needs, it also, most importantly, will allow individuals aged 14 or 15 to hone and enhance valuable employment skills that will set them up for continued success. These individuals will also be able to earn more income by working additional hours. A crucial component of this legislation is parental consent. Parents must agree to allow their teenager to work additional hours. This ensures the decision to work additional hours is made by the individual's parent or guardian, and not dictated by an employer.

House Bill 30 is limited in scope as the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) governs many employers, superceding state law. However, for those employers that are able to avail themselves of this state level change it will be beneficial to their workforce force needs and give more individuals opportunities to gain important work and life skills. If and when Congress acts to make a similar change to the FLSA, Ohio will be well positioned.

¹ <https://www.nfib.com/foundations/research-center/monthly-reports/jobs-report/>

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments in support of Senate Bill 30. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris J. Ferruso", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Christopher J. Ferruso
Interim State Director