



May 11, 2023

To: Members of the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee

Re: HB 33 State Operating Budget for FY 24 & 25

Chairman Cirino, Vice Chairman Rulli, Ranking Member Smith and members of the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony today in support of computer science funding.

Over the past 50 years, we've taught students about vital technical skills through shop classes, daily life lessons through home economics, and fiscal responsibility tools through personal finance courses.

But for the next generation, computer science education is every bit as crucial as learning to balance a budget, make a meal, or prepare for a job interview. The future of Ohio's economy and workforce depend on preparing our students with the necessary skills to compete in a fast paced global economy.

My organization is a statewide tech trade association and we represent a diverse range of members which includes Fortune 500 companies, small and medium-sized businesses, startups, universities, and nonprofits.

Our member companies and organizations are located in cities across Ohio and work in industries such as healthcare, higher education, insurance, financial services, manufacturing, and more. Simply put, in today's economy, every company is a technology company.

I am writing to express our strong support for the expansion of computer science education in Ohio's K-12 curriculum and to restore computer science funding in the state operating budget at \$24 million over the biennium.

There are nearly 700,000 open computing jobs in the United States yet only 5% of high school students study computer science every year. Our students, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds, are at risk of falling behind in an increasingly complex digital economy without computer science education.

For Ohio specifically, in 2022, the state had an average of 18,000 computing jobs open each month with a median annual salary of \$86,642. Yet, there were only 1,842 computer science college graduates in 2019, which left many of these good, high-paying jobs unfilled.

Technology moves at an incredibly fast pace and Ohio needs to take action to ensure that our students are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed in the digital age.

Ohio is in a unique position to lead in computer science education, which is fundamental to building a talented workforce that can drive the state's growth and competitiveness. A strong tech workforce makes us competitive nationally and globally.

OhioX and our members are committed to driving change in this space and building a strong tech-focused workforce. Together, we can create a brighter future for Ohio by investing in computer science education and preparing our students for the digital economy.

We urge the Ohio Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee to support the expansion of computer science education in Ohio's K-12 curriculum. The success of Ohio's economy and workforce depends on it, and we stand ready to support these efforts in every way possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Berry". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chris" and last name "Berry" clearly distinguishable.

Chris Berry
President/CEO, OhioX