



5/13/25

Chair Johnson, Vice Chair Lear, Ranking Member McNally, and members of the House Commerce and Labor Committee:

People First of Ohio is Ohio's only Self-Advocacy Organization whose board is entirely made up of individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD). Many of our members throughout the state have, at some point, received segregated vocational services under the 14c exemption of minimum wage.

People First strongly supports the phasing out of 14c certificates in the state of Ohio as a show of faith in our abilities. With the supports which already exist within the Medicaid Waivers and services through Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD), true vocational training for viable jobs within our communities will prove that we are an Employment First state.

Our members with IDD have found success with quality training and are now employed in various positions at hospitals, local businesses, in hospitality, pharmacies, schools, universities and more. Many have become small business owners. None of these options to become employed within the community were trained within a segregated 14c setting. They were trained within the community.

For individuals who are not interested in competitive employment, there are a wide variety of providers offering Adult Day Services. These programs will not be effected by this bill and will still be afforded the opportunity to explore employment options.

As an organization, People First of Ohio was involved in Ohio's original Employment First Task Force. We strongly believe that our membership deserves the same respect and dignity as other employees to be paid a fair wage for completed work in an integrated setting. 14c is in essence, a discrimination of employees based solely on a diagnosis and a modern-day segregation of Ohioans and contrary to the core of Employment First.

People First of Ohio proudly supports the passage of HB 225, phasing out the subminimum practices within Ohio.