



## **STATEMENT TO THE OHIO STATE HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Before the House Education Committee  
Representative Sarah Fowler Arthur, Chair

Chair Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the House Education Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on behalf of Junior Achievement regarding House Bill 96.

My name is Aydin Sloan. I am a Senior at Tallmadge High School and am here today to speak on behalf of the students who are empowered every day by Junior Achievement's programs. I have been a Junior Achievement Alumni for the past two years, and have contributed as a volunteer to many of their goals.

With my testimony today, I respectfully ask on behalf of myself and Junior Achievement to include an amendment HC0158 to House Bill 96 that would provide \$2.75 million per fiscal year to Junior Achievement. This funding will expand Junior Achievement's impact statewide, ensuring that every student has access to resources that empower them to create actionable career plans and contribute to Ohio's workforce. This funding will support programs in all 88 counties across Ohio.

### **Previous Experience**

Last year I was given the opportunity through Junior Achievement's "High School Heroes" program to teach fifth-graders. This "JA Our Nation" lesson included soft skills needed for interviews, career exploration, discussion of money and bank accounts, and other priorities that they will use throughout their life for financial literacy and career readiness. I was alongside 23 Tallmadge High School students that taught all types of lessons for the future of education and employment within the State of Ohio.

In February of 2024, I was invited to give testimony to the Ohio State House of Representatives House and Senate Members on why Junior Achievement is so important to our students in Ohio's Schools. This opportunity not only had me travel across the State of Ohio, but allowed me to talk to JA Staff and State Leaders who directly impact my education.

This year, I was extended that same opportunity. Not only did I and 13 other students teach fifth-graders in Ohio's Schools about the aforementioned topics, I have the privilege to be back here to give testimony and answer questions on why Junior Achievement is so important.

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### **Access to JA Programs**

Junior Achievement has enabled me to pursue my career goals, those of which include becoming a Law Enforcement Officer for the State of Ohio. The soft skills I have developed through Junior Achievement help me talk to recruiters with insightful questions pertaining to my future employment, and have allowed me to develop a network of employers.

High school volunteers like myself develop the same soft skills that we teach to students. The leadership I demonstrate in classrooms is a skill that future employers will seek when looking towards the future, as well as the necessary skill of adaptability in our ever-changing world. The collaboration amongst volunteers fuels teamwork and trustworthiness in a career. These are all soft skills that I have learned, demonstrated, and will use in current and future employment. Later this week, my classmates and I will attend JA Inspire – a large scale, professional career fair geared toward students, hosted across multiple counties.

Junior Achievement's High School Heroes Program has high school students serve as premiere role models who live and learn in the same community or school district. These students create a vision for the younger generation for voluntarship and career-readiness. These programs are not only directed at younger kids, but directly influence high school students. Through the various opportunities that Junior Achievement provides, high school students like myself can explore their future.

The Ohio Department of Education currently requires only one-half credit of financial literacy as part of our graduation requirement. Giving these crucial lessons to our younger population who will lead the workforce in the coming years ensures that they are prepared for life past high school. Junior Achievement provides this learning at no cost to the students or mentors who volunteer.

Junior Achievement's Volunteer Programs encourage the development and pursuit of further education and serve as a chance for mentors to continue to be a leader in their schools and their community abroad.

Your support for amending House Bill 96 gives Junior Achievement funding to allow volunteers and students alike to continue to make an impact within their community, and their future.