

**Ohio House of Representatives
Education Committee
136th General Assembly
Written Testimony of
James Cosby, Executive Director
Bottom Line Ohio
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Thank you, Chair Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and distinguished members of the House Education Committee for this opportunity to submit written testimony in support of House Bill 96's State Pay for Success Contract Fund amendment.

My name is James Cosby, and I am the Executive Director of Bottom Line Ohio, an organization dedicated to ensuring that students from under-resourced backgrounds have the support they need to access and complete a college education that leads to meaningful careers.

I am writing to express my strong support for the Ohio Treasurer's Pay for Success Contract Fund program, *ResultsOhio*. Initiatives like this allow organizations like ours to create and test metric based models that can move Ohio forward. Our partnership with ResultsOhio aims to support expansion of college access, improve student success outcomes, and strengthen workforce readiness.

Bottom Line Ohio has been working with students in Butler and Clark counties, providing one-on-one mentorship, college counseling, and career development support to ensure that education remains a pathway to economic mobility and we want to expand that work to more students.

Since 1997, Bottom Line has partnered with thousands of students in Boston, Chicago, and New York to improve their educational outcomes and graduation rates and has created a path for skilled workers to build a local workforce, that's how our first Ohio partner, The Connor Group, heard about our approach.

When The Connor Group was researching organizations that help build the postsecondary pipeline and pull students out of poverty, they found that Bottom Line was an expert in this field. They felt so strongly about our evidenced-based model that they made an initial investment to help develop our first Ohio office.

"We don't consider our work 'charity' or 'philanthropy.' We are non-profit investors who search the country to best-in-class programs that pull people out of generational poverty. We've spent roughly eight years researching and vetting college access/success programs. And after all that time, three things are abundantly clear to us.

- 1) There is no surer way out of generational poverty than a bachelor's degree.**
- 2) No college access/success program in the country as effective as Bottom Line.**
- 3) Bottom Line Ohio is on track to become the best market in the organization's portfolio.**

"For all those reasons we committed to a \$3 million, five-year investment in Bottom Line. We believe the program bridges a critical gap between adolescence and career and produces tangible, best-in-class results. We believe it will be a game-changer in Dayton and, eventually, in other parts of the state."

– Ryan Ernst, Director, The Connor Group Kids & Community Partners

We sought out the ResultsOhio program because we believe Ohio is at a critical juncture. We are at the crossroads where the demand for skilled workers continues to rise, yet, too many students—particularly those from underserved communities—face higher education and career advancement barriers. Our data shows that students who receive sustained, individualized support throughout their academic journey are significantly more likely to persist in college and secure well-paying jobs after graduation. Investing in programs that provide such support can help bridge the gap between education and workforce needs here in Ohio.

Our dedication to creating programs based on data and statistics is foundational to our nearly 30 years in education and workforce development. In a Randomized Control Trial comparing Bottom Line outcomes to students who received either different or no college advising support concluded that our program shines: **Bottom Line students are 23% more likely to graduate within four years and make an average of two times their entire family income in their first job post-college.** Notably, we are the first college nonprofit to prove an impact of this magnitude with this depth of research. We are eager to use this evidence based approach in our partnership with ResultsOhio.

I urge this committee to support the State Pay for Success Contract Fund amendment as written. In collaboration with The ResultsOhio team we can build and test a model that enhance access to financial aid, expands student advising and mentorship programs, and strengthen partnerships between educational institutions and employers. Additionally, supporting initiatives like BottomLine that use an evidenced based approach can increase graduate retention will ensure that Ohio remains competitive in an evolving economy.

Bottom Line Ohio stands ready to collaborate with policymakers, educators, and community leaders to implement effective solutions. I appreciate your time and commitment to Ohio's students, and welcome any questions or opportunities for further discussion.

Thank you for your attention and dedication to improving education and workforce outcomes in our state.

James Cosby

Executive Director

Bottom Line Ohio

118 W First St., Suite 850

Dayton, OH 45402

jcosby@bottomline.org

(937)838-1235