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Thomas Hall
State Representative

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Rep. Hall HB 125 Sponsor Testimony

Chair Fowler Arthur, Vice-Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and the members of the House Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 125, legislation to require excused absence from school for 4-H and FFA related activities.

4-H is an invaluable resource and opportunity for growth for countless students, not only in Butler County, but all across Ohio. It is an organization that focuses on the development of our state's young minds through hands on learning that can lead to lifelong skills. It is the constant programming of 4-H, whether through events, clubs, or conferences that these skills are able to be passed on to the next generation of 4-H students. As 4-H is important, so is FFA. Of which we have decided to add FFA to this bill to go alongside the 4-H programs for excusal.

Currently in Ohio, official 4-H and FFA events are not considered sufficient for an excused absence and the decision on whether to allow the excuse absence is at the discretion of the school. The goal of our education system is to give our students lifelong skills that allow them to achieve success in the future. 4-H strives to achieve the exact same goal.

Under our bill,

- (1) A 4-H or FFA educator shall submit written documentation to a school principal or attendance officer as proof of student participation in such an activity or program.
- (2) The district shall give the student the opportunity to make up any school work missed during the absence, and class grades shall not be adversely affected for such an absence.

A school principal or a designee of the school principal shall not grant a student an excused absence under this section if the absence occurs during either of the following:

- (1) A scheduled administration of state assessments.
- (2) Any period of time for which the student has been disciplined, suspended, or expelled, if the terms of such punishment would preclude the student from otherwise participating in an educational field trip or extracurricular activity.

Under HB 125 we would be able to provide all students with the opportunity to expand their horizons and receive the full benefit that 4-H and FFA has to offer without the possibility of conflict with their education.

Once again, Chair Author and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on HB 125 and we would be happy to answer any questions you may have.