

House Primary and Secondary Education Committee
HB 125 Proponent Testimony
Kylie Locke
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Chair Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 125. My name is Kylie Locke, and I am a senior at Northeastern High School in Clark County. I've had the privilege of being a dedicated member of the Northeastern FFA Chapter for the past four years, and for three of those years, I've served as a chapter officer—most recently as Vice President. In addition, I have been actively involved in 4-H, where I've had opportunities to learn, grow, and contribute to my community. These programs have been instrumental in shaping who I am today, both as a student and as a young leader preparing for the future.

FFA and 4-H are more than just extracurricular activities, they are powerful educational experiences that provide young people with hands-on learning, leadership development, and essential life skills. Through my involvement in these programs, I have gained a strong foundation in agriculture, but more importantly, I have learned how to communicate effectively, manage responsibilities, and lead with purpose. These are lessons I will carry with me into college, my career, and beyond.

One of the most impactful components of FFA is the Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE). SAEs are designed to give students real-world experiences in agriculture, whether that means running a small business, conducting research, working with local agribusinesses, or for me purchasing and raising market hogs. Through my SAE, I was able to raise money for college and learn essential life lessons that have prepared me for the workforce. These projects are critical to student development, allowing us to apply what we learn in the classroom in meaningful and practical ways.

However, one conflict that arises is that these projects take time, and sometimes that means time away from the classroom. Whether it's attending livestock shows, participating in leadership conferences, or managing projects that simply can't wait until after school, FFA and 4-H students often face challenges in balancing these obligations with classroom attendance. While some schools are supportive and work with students to ensure they don't fall behind, others are less flexible, resulting in students being penalized for pursuing these valuable educational opportunities. This means that students may be missing out on amazing opportunities that benefit their growth as individuals but also their school. I believe that students very similar to myself should not be penalized for attempting to develop themselves not only as young adults, but as future leaders in our society.

HB 125 would make a significant difference by ensuring that students involved in 4-H and FFA are recognized for their hard work and dedication. It acknowledges the unique and essential educational value these programs offer and would provide students with more equitable

opportunities to grow in Ohio's number one industry—agriculture. This bill helps support student success by allowing flexibility for approved activities, ensuring we are not forced to choose between our passion and our education. This would be monitored and limited but not apply to field trips and other activities that teachers already attend for them. It would provide further opportunities for students without taking the teacher out of the classroom.

As someone who has benefited immensely from both FFA and 4-H, I urge you to support HB 125. It is a step forward in recognizing the importance of agricultural education and the contributions of young people who are dedicated to serving their communities and advancing Ohio's agricultural future.

Thank you for your time and for considering this proponent's testimony, I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.