



# Buckeye Boys State

## Education Committee Testimony

Chairwoman Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson and remaining committee members good morning. I would first like to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today on behalf House Concurrent Resolution. 7, a resolution to support the hard work of the American Legion Buckeye Boys State and American Legion Auxiliary Buckeye Girls State.

I am James Koppin the Buckeye Boys State Director for the American Legion Department of Ohio. In my many years working with the American Legion Department of Ohio I have witnessed a Boys State program from start to finish each year for more than I can remember. Through our program I have personally witnessed thousands of young men start as a blank canvas eager and nervous to see the week ahead and by the end of our time together they gain confidence, mental fortitude, leadership abilities, and lasting friendships with the other delegates around them. Witnessing and being a part of all these changes is why I continue to be a part of this program every year, not to try and coerce these young men to join the military but to see them grow to be more than they thought they could after such little time and to see the young men that will have an impact on not only the state of Ohio but Nationally.

Since its inception in 1936 Buckeye Boys State has evolved from staying in the Ohio State fairgrounds barns with a similar goal as today, to educate the young men of our state in the principle of leadership, political parties, and how those relate to Ohio government into a group educational and leadership academy containing students from over 600 schools across the great state of Ohio and with support from Legionnaires, past Boys State delegates, State Representatives and other state agencies. With this support we are able to ensure each student can get a comprehensive understanding of many governmental principles that we use to this day. They are also afforded the opportunity to practice the teachings and coupled with a strong emphasis on leadership traits these young men effectively run mock governments with positions ranging from state governor down to a city council member.

I respectfully ask that the committee vote in favor of House Concurrent Resolution 7.

Chair Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the committee thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of H.C.R. 7 today.