



Representative Ty Mathews
House District 83

Education Committee, Sponsor Testimony on House Bill 500
October 14, 2025

Chair Fowler-Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Brennan, and members of the House Education Committee:

Thank you for the chance to present sponsor testimony on House Bill 500. This bill makes an important update to state law that will expand opportunity for Ohio students and recognize the full educational and workforce value of Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps—JROTC—programs.

Let me begin by underscoring the real impact of JROTC across Ohio. These programs have long provided high school students with the kind of discipline, leadership, and hands-on skill-building that truly prepares them for meaningful futures. In a JROTC classroom, students learn management, logistics, and problem-solving—skills that mirror what’s taught in career-tech pathways like public safety, engineering, and logistics.

Despite all this, Ohio law does not currently treat JROTC as a career-technical education program. As a result, schools can’t access critical federal grant dollars—like Perkins funding—that help career-tech programs grow and serve more students. This puts JROTC programs and their cadets at a clear disadvantage.

This is the central point of House Bill 500: to give Ohio’s JROTC students and schools the same access to federal resources as their peers in other high-quality career-tech programs. Expanding grant eligibility means JROTC programs can upgrade equipment, expand instruction, and offer more leadership and workforce opportunities to cadets all over the state.

States like Alabama, Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii, and New Jersey have already reclassified JROTC as career-tech education—making these programs eligible for CTE funding, diploma endorsements, and official recognition. They’ve seen

firsthand how federal support helps JROTC reach more students and deliver even greater value.

By passing House Bill 500, we send a clear message: JROTC matters. Its students deserve full recognition for their hard work, and its programs deserve the same resources and opportunities as any other career-technical pathway.

I respectfully urge your support for House Bill 500. Thank you, and I look forward to the committee's questions.