Senate Education Committee
SB 328 Proponent Testimony
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Chairwoman Fowler-Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Brennan, and honorable members of the House Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer proponent testimony for Senate Bill 328 (SB 328). SB 328 will allow Ohio's students to be earlier and better prepared for their careers and ensure the programs serving our students are the best they can be through increased data collection and better cross-agency cooperation.

Ohio Farm Bureau believes that the better we can prepare our students for the workforce, the better off those students and our state will be in the future. Exposing students to career opportunities in school is critical to accomplishing this goal. We have seen tremendous success in middle school career tech programs in getting students interested in future careers in agriculture. More and more middle school FFA chapters are being established across the state and exposing students to animal science, environmental studies, welding, and even zoology. While obviously not every student will join the agricultural industry or FFA, OFBF believes a robust education system that focuses on career-connected learning allows our students the greatest opportunity to reach their full potential.

SB 328 reinforces Ohio's commitment to career-connected learning in various ways. It ensures that every Ohio student is exposed to potential careers in middle school and provides them with career coaching to help chart their path through high school and beyond. Starting with 8th-grade students in 2027, the bill creates personalized academic and career plans for each student that allow them and their parents to view progress in real time and make individualized decisions that help them reach success in their future careers. Lastly, the bill allows ODEW to collaborate more closely with other state agencies to review data and create reports that show we are spending taxpayer dollars on programs that deliver the best ROI for our students and our state.

I wouldn't be standing in front of you today if it weren't for career tech education and the investment that was made in me. My FFA advisor was the one who first taught me how to write a speech, how to weld, how to market a product, and how to care for the community I live in. They prepared me not only for my career but also to be a better person in my adult life. This is not an uncommon story that you would hear when asking students who were involved in career tech education.

Ohio Farm Bureau appreciates being part of the Career Connected Learning coalition, which devoted many hours to robust discussion, debate, and research, resulting in the piece of

legislation before you. Investing in our students and their future now will ensure that our state and its workforce will prosper in the next generation. Thank you to Senator Koehler for introducing this bill, and thank you to the committee for the opportunity to testify today. I'd be happy to answer any questions at this time.