

Dean Morrison
Ontario High School | Junior Achievement
House Finance Committee | March 12, 2025

Chairman Stewart, Vice Chair Dovilla, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the Finance Committee, thank you for allowing me to speak today. **While you consider amendment HC0158, which provides state funding support for Junior Achievement, I would like to share why Junior Achievement means so much to me.**

My name is Dean Morrison and I am a senior at Ontario High School. Before I get started, I feel as if it is necessary to give you a little background on why I am here speaking in front of you today. A while back, I had plans to be a barber after college with a slogan that went, “Want your hair lookin’ clean? Call Dean!” I was very passionate about that career path and found a great sense of satisfaction in making people look and feel good.

However, as my senior year of high school went on, I decided to take a class called Current Events. In class, we discussed current political issues, such as healthcare, climate change, and economic inequality. Ms. Rachel, who had helped me get in front of you today, was presenting to our class and questioning what my classmates and I wanted to be when we were older. When I informed her that I wanted to become a lawyer, and then a politician, and then one day be President, she had a big smile on her face and then questioned why. I told her what inspired me to want to become those things, but I couldn’t tell her why I wanted to be those things. This is where the importance of the Junior Achievements program comes into play.

When questioned why we want to be something that we have such big aspirations for, it allows our minds to open up to real-world problems and how to solve them. For me, she helped point out the character traits and strong skills I had within myself to chase this dream and that is when I realized why I wanted to do it. I had noticed how passionate my classmates were in that Current Events class. What also stood out was how the difference of opinions created a divide among my peers. Obviously, we were all from different backgrounds, with varying viewpoints and experiences, yet they shared a commonality of struggling to allow each other to feel differently about topics. That was when it clicked for me, I wanted to become a politician, I wanted to make a difference. I wanted to show that we can be passionate about a change but still work together. Inspired by what motivates many of you to run for office, I want to support my peers, strengthen my community, and spread a message of kindness to unite people.

Without Junior Achievements, students like myself wouldn't be challenged to dive deeper into our aspirations. Junior Achievements not only prepares us for the next step in our journey but also prepare us to become leaders in our communities, classrooms, sports, and the world.

With your support, Junior Achievement will continue to empower students with critical life skills, strengthen our workforce, and contribute to Ohio's future. They will continue to help small-town young adults like myself to chase our dreams. Thank you.