



**Nico Morgione Director, Government Affairs**

**Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber**

**Proponent Testimony – House Bill 159**

To Chairman Claggett, Vice Chair Workman, Ranking Member Mohamed, and the House Technology & Innovation Committee members, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill 159 (HB 159). My name is Nico Morgione, and I am the Director of Government Affairs for the Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber (YWRC).

On behalf of the Regional Chamber's Government Affairs Council and our entire Board of Directors, I would like to present our proponent letter to HB 159.

The YWRC is the third largest metro chamber of commerce in the Great State of Ohio, with nearly 3,000 member organizations representing more than 150,000 employees in and around the Mahoning Valley. Our mission is "To provide the economic development, advocacy and business services to promote the growth of our members and Valley." Our vision is "To be a catalyst for economic success, creating a prosperous Valley that is the preferred community in which to live, learn, work, and play."

In our efforts to meet our mission and vision statements, we routinely advocate for policies that positively impact businesses in our region, such as HB 159. The Mahoning Valley has a significant manufacturing history. Overtime, as manufacturing in the United States has begun to offshore, we have seen population decline and the manufacturers that have maintained their presence in our region face struggles to remain competitive with larger firms. The Mahoning Valley is fortunate to be home to some large manufacturers, but the vast majority of manufacturers in our region are smaller operations. In fact, of our more than 220 manufacturing members, 166 of them have less than 51 employees and 54 of them have between 51 and 500 employees. Both of these groups directly benefit from HB 159.

Manufacturing is rapidly evolving and as more innovation occurs in areas such as artificial intelligence or additive manufacturing, we need to ensure our companies are able to keep up. The ability to implement new technologies to manufacturing processes is especially critical for smaller companies. New innovations in technology often are expensive, which can form a barrier to small companies. HB 159 is a welcome solution to this problem and allows companies to apply for grants to receive up to \$150,000 toward the cost of new manufacturing technologies. We support the language within the proposed legislation that requires an eligible manufacturer to obtain an assessment of the proposed project before applying for a grant. This ensures the projects seeking funding will be impactful to the company by increasing productivity, efficiency, and competitiveness.

**NICO MORGIONE**, *Director of Government Affairs*

**O:** 330-744-2131, ext. 1112 | **C:** 330-502-6633 | [Nico@regionalchamber.com](mailto:Nico@regionalchamber.com)

City Centre One, Suite 500 | 100 E. Federal Street | Youngstown, OH 44503 | [regionalchamber.com](http://regionalchamber.com)



The Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber strongly supports House Bill 159 because we recognize and advocate in favor of legislation that we see as positively impacting business. HB 159 does this by lowering the cost burden for manufacturers looking to implement new technologies. At this lower cost, manufacturers can boost their productivity, efficiency, and competitiveness. Finally, we support HB 159 because it meets our mission, "To provide economic development, advocacy and business services to promote the growth of our members and Valley."

Thank you for your time and consideration of our position. I would happily respond to any questions you may have in writing or in-person.

Sincerely,

*Nico Morgione*