



To the Chair, Senator Brenner; Vice Chair, Senator Blessing; Ranking Member, Senator Ingram; and author of SB 156, Senator Cutrona:

OK, Inc. is a community-based, nonprofit organization that is celebrating 37 years of serving youth in northeast Ohio. One of the longest-running relationship education programs in the country, OK, Inc.'s organizational mission is to challenge young people to develop healthy relationships and strong character so they may build and sustain committed marriages and strong families in the future.

OK, Inc.'s programs share the *Success Sequence* to promote poverty prevention and healthy family formation by encouraging youth to set long-term life goals that include graduating from high school, at a minimum getting a full-time job, and if they choose to get married, have children after marriage. We help them understand that the sequence or order in which a person achieves some of life's major milestones increases their chances for success. We want them to realize planning and moving toward long-term life goals requires making intentional decisions along the way and avoiding risk behaviors that may be barriers to their success.

OK, Inc. serves over 10,000 youth annually in 100-plus schools in urban, suburban, and rural communities including economically hard-hit communities in Ohio's rust belt—Youngstown, Cleveland, and Warren, Ohio where child poverty is amplified. 50% of children in Youngstown, 46% of children in Cleveland, and 48% of children in Warren live in poverty. These communities also have low rates of married mothers, 32%, 33%, and 34% respectively. Yet, despite their disadvantages, youth in these communities embrace the *Success Sequence* with a new-found exuberance that they have the formula for a prosperous future.

OK, Inc. supports the passage of Senate Bill 156 to ensure all Ohio youth are given the advantage of learning a tangible, practical, and proven pathway to financial stability built on the primacy of education, employment, and healthy family formation. The strength of the association between the *Success Sequence* and financial flourishing cannot be dismissed: 97% of millennials who follow the *Success Sequence* are not poor at 28-34 years old. Nearly 80% of all Americans (specifically, 77% of all Americans, and 76% of American parents) favor teaching the *Success Sequence* in schools.

Please contact me with any questions. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on Senate Bill 156.

Peggy Pecchio, OK, Inc. Executive Director

References available upon request.

OK, Inc.
2305 East Aurora Road A-1
Twinsburg, Ohio 44087
330.486.0602