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Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee. Thank you for allowing me to offer remarks today.

I am requesting support for the funding in HB 96 for Junior Achievement. This funding will expand JA's reach across Ohio, providing students with resources to create career plans and contribute to the workforce. It will enhance work-readiness, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship programs in all 88 counties.

The funding in the budget encompasses six Junior Achievement regions in Ohio: North Central Ohio, Greater Cleveland, Central Ohio, Eastern Ohio, Northwestern Ohio, and OKI Partners, which serves Southwest and Western Ohio. Together, these organizations cover the entire state.


I would like to paint a picture for you. Imagine a world where every student graduates high school equipped with the knowledge to make smart financial decisions, an entrepreneurial mindset, and essential career skills along with motivation to seek employment in Ohio. At Junior Achievement, this is our mission. We strive to inspire young people to take charge of their future success and to develop the skillsets and mindsets to become a capable, future ready workforce.

For over 80 years, Junior Achievement has impacted millions of students across Ohio through hands-on programming that connects real-world concepts to education. We deliver more than 164,000 student experiences annually with approximately 900,000 instructional hours spent working with students, and each year JA partners with hundreds of organizations that provide volunteers, helping students build a real-world connection to what they are learning in the classroom.

Regarding our partners, I would like to request that the Committee review the letters of support that Junior Achievement has received from various stakeholders across the state. These letters have been submitted by CEOs, small business owners, students, local government partners, and educational service centers. Collectively, these organizations acknowledge the essential services that Junior Achievement provide to their communities and the role we play in building talent pipelines and developing our future workforce.

A recent IPSOS study reveals that over half of JA alumni credit the program with enhancing their work ethic (57%) and career choices (56%). Furthermore, JA alumni earn higher incomes, achieve greater job satisfaction, are more likely to start their own businesses, and have higher levels of educational attainment than the general population. Ninety percent believe JA significantly shaped their confidence in reaching their goals. Overall, these findings paint a picture where small business growth is thriving, where families are financially stable and therefore paying off debt sooner and buying homes sooner, and the talent pipeline in Ohio is bolstered from within as students graduate with the skills that they need to be an effective and capable workforce for Ohio's future.

Over the years I have been privileged to experience the impact of JA's programming firsthand. I have spoken to many alumni who say that they are business owners today because of their JA experience, that JA led them to become first time college graduates, and that they discovered what they wanted to



be when they grew up because of JA. These stories are my why, but the majority of students across Ohio each school year do not have access to JA's programming currently.

That is why I thank you for your time and for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of the schools and students that Junior Achievement serves.