



May 14, 2025

Chairman Steve Huffman
Ohio Senate Health Committee
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: House Bill 96 – Written Proponent Testimony

Dear Chairman Huffman:

The Ohio Manufacturers' Association (OMA) was created in 1910 with the mission to protect and grow Ohio manufacturing. Today, it has nearly 1,300 members representing the largest economic sector in the state, which contributed more than \$133 billion to Ohio's economy in 2023. According to the most recent data, nearly 700,000 Ohioans work in manufacturing, and manufacturing has the largest payroll of any Ohio economic sector.

Our state has seen an unprecedented amount of investment into the manufacturing sector and there is still more to be done in order to address the workforce needs of Ohio's manufacturers. Employers continue to cite talent availability as one of the biggest challenges they currently face. Sustained growth in manufacturing productivity will require efforts to recruit and retain untapped talent populations. Ohio has continued to succeed in attracting major manufacturing investments, and there is more work to be done to ensure that the jobs created by these investments can be filled.

The OMA writes today to request your support of a budget amendment regarding WorkAdvance, a proven, employer-driven workforce solution connecting underutilized talent, including Ohioans on SNAP, to high-quality, industry-aligned training. Participants receive essential skills, industry-recognized credentials, and up to 12 months of career coaching. Since its implementation, WorkAdvance has:

- Trained 1,884 Ohioans (100% credential attainment)
- Placed 1,428 workers in manufacturing jobs (79% placement rate)
- Achieved average starting wages of \$18.14/hour with benefits

We respectfully request \$2.5 million in General Revenue Funds (GRF) and \$500,000 in federal SNAP Employment and Training funds per fiscal year to grow the WorkAdvance program in order to connect more participants to well-paying manufacturing jobs. This investment, placed within ODJFS line items, is why this request is before the Health Committee.

Ohio has developed a model for the country that builds the workforce pipeline through WorkAdvance. By supporting the statewide implementation of this program, Ohio will build the necessary infrastructure to prepare our workforce for new jobs and reshoring efforts, ensuring our state remains a national leader in advanced manufacturing.

Chairman of the Board
JEFFREY J. ORAVITZ
CEO, Seal For Life Industries / Henkel

President
RYAN AUGSBURGER



For our state to continue to lead in manufacturing, it is critical that we take action now to ensure that a stable pipeline of workers is available to fill vacancies in both existing and new manufacturing plants. The WorkAdvance program has already proven its success and is ready to be scaled up to serve more Ohioans to help fill in-demand jobs.

The OMA appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony on this workforce development program, and asks for your consideration for inclusion in the operating budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lindsey Short".

Lindsey Short
Managing Director, Advocacy and Energy Services
The Ohio Manufacturers' Association