



SENATE BILL 50 – (MINOR WORK HOURS)

PROPONENT TESTIMONY- OHIO SENATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 18, 2025

Chairman Koehler, Vice-Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Ohio Senate Workforce Development Committee, my name is Chris Ferruso, and I serve as State Director of the National Federation of Independent Business in Ohio (NFIB). I am here on behalf of our nearly 21,000 governing members to lend our support for Senate Bill 50.

For reference, NFIB is a small business trade association founded over 80 years ago that is dedicated to representing the interests of small and independent businesses across our state and nation. NFIB's mission is to promote the right of our members to own, operate and grow their businesses. NFIB members come from all industry sectors and each of the 88 counties across Ohio. Our average member has 15 or fewer employees and has less than \$2 million in annual gross receipts.

Our members' inability to fill workplace vacancies remains a top concern. In fact, 35 percent of members report job openings that are hard to fill. Additionally, 52 percent of our members indicate they are hiring or attempting to hire.¹

¹ https://www.nfib.com/news-article/monthly_report/jobs-report/

Senate Bill 50 may help address some of our members workforce needs. This bill, most importantly, will allow individuals aged 14 or 15 to hone and enhance valuable employment skills that will set them up for continued success and do so with more flexibility to fit their schedules. Please note, this bill does not increase the number of hours a 14- or 15-year-old may work, it just gives a longer timeframe in which to work the current number of permitted hours. Currently, this age group may work until 9pm from June 1 to September 1 and Senate Bill 50 will extend this permission to all year. Additionally, nothing in this bill expands where a 14- or 15-year-old may work. The same prohibitions that exist today in state and federal law remain under Senate Bill 50.

A crucial component of this legislation is parental consent. Parents must agree and sign a minor work hour notification form (a newly created document under the bill) to allow their son or daughter to work additional hours. This ensures the decision to work additional hours is done with agreement and sign off by the individual's parent or guardian and not dictated by an employer. This form is required for the superintendent of a school district to issue an age and schooling certificate or work permit.

It is worth noting, House Bill 50 is limited in scope as the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) governs many employers. FLSA supersedes state law. However, for those employers that can avail themselves of this state level change it may be beneficial to their workforce needs. Should Congress act to make a similar change to the FLSA, Ohio will be well positioned.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide support for Senate Bill 50. I am happy to try and address any questions.