



Ohio Association of Community Colleges

February 23, 2016

The Honorable Nan Baker
Chair, House Economic and Workforce Development Committee
12th Floor Riffe Center
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chairwoman Baker,

On behalf of Ohio's 23 community colleges, the Ohio Association of Community Colleges strongly supports House Bill 429. The bill, sponsored by Representatives Antani and Reineke, expands the Incumbent Workforce Training Voucher Program to include automotive technicians.

By providing funds to help reimburse businesses for successful completion of training of existing workers, the current Incumbent Workforce Training Voucher Program is an important tool in helping fill Ohio's skills gap. The program helps to offset a business' expenses in providing employees with the critical training necessary to advance their careers. Certainly, expanding eligibility to include auto technicians would be consistent the program's goals of helping employers to grow and retain their existing workforce by providing educational and technical training in this highly-skilled field.

One of the central tenets of the modern-day mission of Ohio's community colleges is to provide the training and technical education necessary to meet the workforce demands of our region. Leaders of 2-year intuitions remain fully committed to meeting these workforce needs and understand the importance of aligning our programs to meet Ohio's overall economic development strategy. Companies need to know that there will be a qualified workforce to hire while ensuring that their current employees have the required technical skills to retain their workforce. At the same time, individuals want to ensure they have access to the training and educational opportunities necessary to grow their career paths in order to better their own lives.

By expanding the Workforce Training Voucher Program to include automotive technicians, HB 429 will help attract and retain workers in this highly technical profession. As you have already heard from proponents of this bill, many of Ohio's community colleges work closely with local automotive repair companies to provide training for their workers. Our colleges are key partners in helping to provide the skills necessary to help businesses meet the demands of this evolving industry while enabling incumbent workers to advance their careers in an in-demand field.

The Ohio Association of Community Colleges is pleased offer our strong support HB 429. Making automotive technicians eligible for the Incumbent Workforce Training Program will provide valuable investment in these highly-skilled workers and help meet the Ohio's workforce needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jack Hershey".

Jack Hershey
President & CEO

Ohio Association of Community Colleges

cc: Members of the House Economic and Workforce Development Committee