

Testimony by
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In support of GRF 200597 as part of H.B. 64
“Education Program Support”

FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology)

Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Schuring and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am Peter V. Buca, Vice President Technology & Innovation for Parker Hannifin’s Fluid Connectors Group. Parker is a global diversified industrial company specializing in Motion and Control. We were founded approximately 100 years ago in Cleveland, Ohio, where our worldwide headquarters is also located. With annual sales of over \$13 billion, Parker is currently listed at 217 on Fortune Magazine’s Top 500. Parker has 3,681 employees in the State of Ohio and 27 locations including its world headquarters in Mayfield Heights.

As a Vice President of Technology & Innovation, I am responsible for engineering and new product development for Parker’s Fluid Connectors Group with more than \$3 billion in annual sales and 20 global divisions. I have been involved with FIRST for 15 years along with my family – Diane Sadowski and Melody DS Buca, our daughter. During this time, we have mentored FIRST Lego League teams, FIRST Robotics Teams 274 and 2399, sponsored and held FIRST Lego League tournaments, mentored and sponsored VEX Robotics Teams 2113 and 2113A, been members of the Regional Planning Committee for the Buckeye FRC Regional (10+ years), refereed multiple tournaments in and outside the State of Ohio, judged, inspected, and otherwise volunteered. Our family members have each been individually recognized by FIRST as Volunteers of the Year for the Buckeye Regional – Pete in 2009, Diane in 2012, Melody in 2015. Diane’s business, FirstFuelCells, has financially supported FRC Team 2399.

Parker Hannifin is a national Gold level sponsor for the FIRST Robotics FRC program and has sponsored multiple teams annually at the local level both in and outside Ohio. Parker also provides major support for the FIRST Buckeye Regional every year as well as the Michigan district tournaments. Parker also provides volunteers and mentors to multiple FIRST Teams throughout the U.S.

I am here in support of GRF 200597 as I believe it will provide a means to extend the positive benefits of the FIRST program to many more deserving Ohio youth. We have seen the enormous impact robotics competitions have had with our own eyes. Time and again, we have witnessed students – trapped in circumstances beyond their control, weighed down by burdens no child should have to bear – raise themselves up and meet the challenge of this amazing competition. These students learn that they are capable of incredible things, mastering technologies that they only dreamed about to compete effectively with others on the playing field. Many of these students are transformed by this experience and the number of FIRST “graduates” pursuing STEM education and technology degrees is astounding.

Parker Hannifin supports FIRST – my family and I support FIRST – because it has proven to be an effective and efficient way to change the world for the better. A good way to make the lives of our children better. A method to improve the quality and quantity of skilled technologists in the US and State of Ohio. It is a program that leads to success. One of the most powerful testimonies to the effectiveness of FIRST is the large number of mentors that come from past student participants. These students so strongly believe in the value of the program that they return year after year to help assure the continued success of their school’s programs. Unfortunately, all programs effective or otherwise, have a cost to implement.

While much of the cost of FIRST is borne by the companies donating their equipment to the competition kits, the cost of the recurring events, teachers, and support personnel limit both the number of teams that can participate and the number of competitions that can be held. Bill GRF 200597 begins to address these issues which have combined to limit the participation of our most needy schools. The State of Ohio has many teams that benefit from FIRST participation but would be better served if more teams from inner city and inner ring suburbs could afford to participate with adequate resources and support. GRF 200597 will help address this and expand the competition to allow more positive experiences for our students.

Thank you for your consideration of GRF 200597. The bill has my support and that of Parker Hannifin Corporation. We look forward to the day when this bill is passed into law.