



Sponsor Testimony: HB 245 – Consumer Protection Call Center Act

Chairman Young, Vice Chair DeVitis, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and members of the House Economic Development Commerce and Labor Committee: thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on HB 245, The Consumer Protection Call Center Act.

This is the second year in a row that I have joint-sponsored this legislation, and I do so with pride because HB 245 is an unequivocally pro-Ohio, job-saving bill that ensures state taxpayer dollars are supporting companies that hire within our state. The Consumer Protection Call Center Act prevents any employer that relocates call center jobs to a foreign country from being eligible for state grants, loans, tax benefits or any other economic incentive for five years. It also establishes the crucial goal of requiring that - within two years of the bill's effective date – all contractor employees who do call center work for the state will perform that work in Ohio.

Call center jobs are some of the most easily outsourced positions in the country. Ohio currently has about 171,000 customer service call center jobs, which is, unfortunately, close to 14,000 jobs less than what we had in 2006. Workers in this industry have fallen victim to big companies looking to increase their profit margins by replacing hardworking Ohioans with cheap foreign labor. The state should not be bankrolling companies that allow our families and state economy to suffer in this way. I believe the strong disincentive of relinquishing a company's eligibility for state resources and contracts will go a long way to deter companies from outsourcing our call center industry.

HB 245 also empowers the Department of Jobs and Family Services (JFS) to track companies that have relocated call center jobs and share that list with all state agencies to ensure accountability. Any company intending to relocate their call center must notify the Director of JFS at least 120 days prior to the relocation or face a civil penalty.

I believe the Consumer Protection Call Center Act offers a fairly simple incentive to help keep jobs in Ohio and make sure our middle class workers can continue to support their families. With that, I defer to my joint sponsor who will talk a little more about the benefits of this legislation. Then, Chairman Young and members of the committee, we'd both be happy to answer any questions you may have.