



Chairman Brenner, Vice Chairwoman Slaby, Ranking Member Fedor and Members of the House Education and Career Readiness committee for this opportunity to provide written proponent testimony on House Bill 549 on behalf of the Ohio Fair Managers Association.

My name is Howard Call and I am a Past President of the Ohio Fair Managers Association (OFMA) and I currently serve as the Executive Director of the Association. The OFMA is the statewide association representing Ohio's 95, county, independent fairs and the Ohio State Fair. I am proud to be a board member of the Summit County Fair in Tallmadge, Ohio.

House Bill 549 would specify that schools do not open for instruction until after Labor Day. It is important to note that school districts are afforded flexibility from this if they host a public meeting to discuss starting prior to Labor Day for community input.

As you well know, county and independent fairs are the cornerstone event for many communities. We are a showcase for Ohio's agriculture and 4-H programs and we provide an opportunity for families to have fun together. Ohio has a long tradition of supporting county fairs and our members pride themselves on offering a great event for their communities.

County fairs operate during the summer months, many with a start date before Labor Day. County fairs offer our youth countless ways to become involved in their local communities, students turn to their county fair for summer employment, many students participate in 4-H activities, and families visit their county fairs for traditional family fun.

Traditional school classrooms should not have a monopoly on student learning. OFMA believes there is a lot of learning and growth is happening for these young people that are participating in their county fairs through summer employment and 4-H activities. All learning environments are important. Ohio is known for being rich in agriculture and history, HB 549 allows our communities to take advantage of these great benefits!

Mr. Chairman, Members of the committee, thank you for considering this perspective of the OFMA.